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HENRIK IBSEN

BY MONTROSE J. MOSES

CHILDREN'S BOOKS AND READING
HENRIK IBSEN THE MAN AND HIS PLAYS
FAMOUS ACTOR FAMILIES IN AMERICA
LITERATURE OF THE SOUTH In preparation

EDITED BY MR. MOSES

EVERYMAN A Morality Play

HENRIK IBSEN

THE MAN AND HIS PLAYS

by

MONTROSE J. MOSES



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PREFATORY CHAPTER

THE development of Henrik Ibsen is a thoroughly consistent one if taken in connection with the intellectual fermentation which followed the Revolution of 1848. It is a wrong point of view that strives to over-emphasize the emotive value of the dramatist's work, and to separate the individual plays, with their dominant ideas, from the conditions, both social and temperamental, which preceded their composition. On the other hand, that criticism is false which ignores the artistic characteristics, and attempts to explain every situation, every psychological phase by some exterior fact.

After following the incidents in the life of Henrik Ibsen step by step, one is impressed by the meagreness of detail, but also by the intensity with which the few details were met. The moments worthy of record constitute events of importance either to the world or to Scandinavia; the man came from his inner self only when he could sound a trumpet blast or applaud the trumpet blasts of others. But, curiously, isolation was necessary to a spirit such as his; he was endowed with the gift of seeing better from afar; his aggressiveness, the result of inheritance, of environment, of individual genius, cut him off from the natural progress of society, and by his isolation he was enabled to form a perspective without which he could not have developed.

Curiously, this same isolation was characteristic of Ibsen's mental growth, for while he read considerably and promiscuously, it cannot be said that he was in any way a man of culture in the academic sense. He was endowed with a certain intuitive force that drew from events and from the spirit of the time what was necessary for him; he seemed to grasp instinctively that which others obtained from books. He went through the world, a student of men, keenly observing, as every dramatist should, the living flow of life, asking others to give him whatever technical data he might need.

At first glance it would appear that Ibsen was little more than an intellectual machine, but this is not so: no more human example is to be found in literary history. The obscuration of the man, on the one hand through mystification and on the other through unnecessary gossip and popular astonishment, has resulted in an isolation from his public, which Henrik Ibsen does not deserve. But since his death, after the final word was spoken by him, the publication of the Ibsen letters has done much to illuminate the silence which characterized his life. One can look back over the years and say of him that never was there a truer patriot, a firmer friend, and, even in the face of his wilful separation from his family, a more zealous head of the household. Some critics have called his a suburban type of mind, yet no man drew more from the current press than Ibsen; no man saw the modern movement more clearly than he; and he translated all facts in terms of the intensity which they might add to the current of time.

Ibsen was fortunate in his friends; those may not

be said to lack the opportunities of a broad culture of association, who can claim intellectual kinship with such types of mind as Björnstjerne Björnson and George Brandes possessed. Critics are heard to express surprise that Wordsworth, in the quietness of Grasmere, apparently aloof from the world's activity, was yet so keenly in touch with philosophic thought and with political situations, even though he was more persistent than Ibsen in his tendency to ignore books. But it must be borne in mind that the stimulation received from the contact with Coleridge was a university education in itself. Brandes stood in like relation toward Ibsen.

The type of personality whose growth we are to trace is one which develops early in life; the change which characterizes it is of depth, of intensity, of concentration; its realization is subjective and its limitations, as far as expression is concerned, are very evident. There is more variety in the Ibsen of the romantic period than of the modern social phase; yet even in the saga dramas and in the satires, where his imagination and his humour were given certain freedom to disport themselves, the germs of future plays and the motives or suggestions for later situations are to be detected. Ibsen was not a man of rich narrative invention.

Having identified himself so closely with what we are pleased to term modern problems, having almost determinedly killed a lyrical Pegasus from under him, instead of having had it killed, as Brandes suggests, Ibsen fell into the natural error, beginning with "The Wild Duck," of gathering his philosophical theories together and of introducing them by means

of symbols into his plays. He found his poetry not so facile as heretofore, and his taste not so content with the stark and naked details of "Ghosts." The result was an indefiniteness which was coincident with the spiritual alteration detected in "The Wild Duck," and which, with the exception of "The Master Builder," marked every drama in his final period—a period of decadence rather than of positive illumination.

To understand the Henrik Ibsen that exists between the writing of his poem on "Resignation" (1847) and of his epilogue, "When We Dead Awaken" (1899), necessitates a consideration of history, of philosophy, and of social revolution through evolution. From the time when his verses —no less than six individual poems—contained the glint of moonlight, to the time when he himself began to estimate the true value of his fight, calls for the adjusting of legitimate cause and effect, and behind every one of his productions a dynamic force has to be considered.

We cannot very well separate the man from his work; we must, to some extent, reach an estimate of the man's ability by means of the full value which he himself places upon the work. At the last, Ibsen reminds one of an extinct volcano; we look down the crater of his life and wonder whether he has obtained the most from the fires which burned and flickered and went out in the ashes of old age. There is a note of vain regret sounded during his final years which would indicate that much of the truth of life was missed by him in his zealous regard for the welfare of humanity. The sarcastic laugh at his own ex-

pense in "The Wild Duck" represents a change of base from the cynical levity at the expense of society in "Love's Comedy."

Had Ibsen ceased to exist after the publication of "Emperor and Galilean" (1873), he would have been a great poet among Scandinavians; he would have been a man of one poem, "Brand," in Germany. It was through his modern social and sexual dramas that his name became international, and that his technique overcame in an interesting struggle the prevailing technique of Scribe and Dumas in the theatres. But should one ask whether these social studies, despite their mechanism and their psychological analyses, are permanent contributions to the stage, we are tempted to say no. "The Vikings at Helgeland" and "The Pretenders" will outlive "A Doll's House" and "Rosmersholm"; "Peer Gynt" and "Brand," because of a certain large human universality of character which they both contain, will be of more value by reason of their imaginative conception than "Pillars of Society" and "An Enemy of the People," which are more local and timely in their social and political scope. "Ghosts," representing a modern example of Greek precision, of fatal inevitableness, of perfectness in marshalling circumstances, will become individualized because of the Greek characteristics.

But Ibsen's modern social dramas, once they have passed the line where their purpose becomes inactive, and their point of view merely an historical one, will represent only the value of Ibsen's technique, which they typify. It is the spiritual bravery of the man and the technical craftsmanship of the playwright

which command and assure his future recognition. In perspective, after events and circumstances have been marshalled in consecutive order, Henrik Ibsen's pessimism will be found to be due not to moral hopelessness but to moral indignation: his ethical significance is active, his social dream optimistic. In no way did he temper the wind to the shorn lamb, nor protect the parts he vaccinated; but, though his realism is sometimes unnecessarily severe, though by nature he withdrew into the silence, a study of Henrik Ibsen will not be devoid of a romantic glow, will not be lacking in a poignant humour which lay concealed in idea and personality. Despite the narrowness of his character, and however antithetical the statement might seem, the figure of Ibsen is many-sided.

In this study, the groundwork has been based upon Mr. William Archer's definitive English edition of Ibsen's dramas, the publication of which has just been completed. It is out of the question for those unfamiliar with the Scandinavian tongues to understand anything of the Ibsen diction; we know by his letters how he strove for the pure element in language, and how he was especially bitter against those writers who avoided the use of distinctively Norwegian words and phrases for Danish equivalents. In the metrical pieces, it is difficult for the English translator to escape a certain commonplace phraseology closely akin to the stilted and stereotyped style of the modern opera libretto.

When "Love's Comedy" was given its first production in America (New York, 1908), the couplets and alternate rhymes of Professor Herford's translation sounded awkward in the stage rendering. "Peer

Gynt" at times escapes the prosaic, although Mr. Richard Mansfield's reading of the lines emphasized the meagreness of the English evaluation of word-colour. "Brand," comparable in scope with "Faust," is somewhat thin in its sonorousness. The lyric, the epic, and the saga qualities, the ballad characteristics and spirit, lose their spontaneousness. Yet, taken all together, the translations of the poetic dramas are commendable, however literal, while the prose dramas possess a marked literary style.

As for the poems, individual pieces have been indifferently turned into English, and the reader who wishes the complete collection has either to resort to the German translations of Emma Klingenfeld, Ludwig Fulda, Max Bamberger and Christian Morgenstern, or to the French of Vicomte de Colleville and F. de Zepelin. In my own case, I have used both, not having full confidence in the faithfulness of translations, and feeling that one might act as a check upon the other, especially in those cases where Ibsen's uncomplimentary references to the Germans have been known to be omitted from some of the German editions. For example, when Passarge translated the "Balloon Letter to a Swedish Lady," he cut out all intended thrusts at Bismarck and Moltke —innuendoes joyously retained by the French. Ibsen's international reputation rests upon translation, and he thus stands peculiarly at the mercy of the literary middle-man. That he is so well understood and so largely appreciated is thus partly due to the sincerity of the translators.

The Ibsen bibliography is naturally large, for the dramatist has dealt with theories and problems that

have had to battle for recognition; each play has had to progress from post to post, and each publication encouraged or challenged a deluge of comment. The biographies are numerous, but I am especially indebted to Jæger, Brandes, and the Ibsen Letters edited by John Nilsen Laurvik and Mary Morison. Mr. Edmund Gosse's "Life" has served to place Ibsen in his Scandinavian literary setting, although I doubt whether, for English-speaking readers, it is quite necessary to enter minutely into a comparative analysis of the Ibsen motives with those of his Northern contemporaries. However, most of the works of Brandes and Björnson are accessible in translation, and to supplement the Scandinavian references, Paul Botten-Hansen's "La Norvège Littéraire au 19e Siècle. Catalogue Systématique" (Christiania, 1868) and Frederik Winkel Horn's "History of the Literature of the Scandinavian North" (translated by Rasmus B. Anderson) will be found particularly useful. The latter contains a "Bibliography of the Important Books in the English Language Relating to the Scandinavian Countries," compiled by Thorvald Solberg (1895). J. B. Halvorsen's "Bibliografiske Oplysninger til Henrik Ibsens Samlede Værker" (KJØBENHAVN, 1901) is of inestimable worth to the student, however much it may ignore English and American criticism and stage history. In particular, I wish to emphasize my appreciation of Mr. Archer's researches, covering a period since Ibsen was introduced into England by Mr. Gosse, who wrote the first estimate for the London *Spectator* of ~~April 82~~, 1872; his work has been indefatigable, and his critical introductions for the

Mar. 16.

new edition of Ibsen are excellent examples of the surety with which he handles detail.

I shall have to let my bibliographies convey my indebtedness to my varied sources, biographical and otherwise. The commentaries, which are so plentiful, indicate how prone criticism is to wander far from the main line of argument. On the whole, it would seem to me that the French appreciation of Ibsen is more systematic than the German in its attempt to measure the social and artistic value of the dramatist. But it is very evident, on the whole, that as far as a book is concerned, Henrik Ibsen has not yet received full credit as a man and as an artist. There is a mean between the extremes of "Mr. Punch's Pocket Ibsen" and Auguste Ehrhard's "Henrik Ibsen et le Théâtre Contemporain"—yet there is truth in both. To approach the Norwegian dramatist without obtruding personal theories, to be blind to the symbol within the symbol, are qualities which a biographer should strive to attain. There are sufficient actualities in the life of the man and in the working out of his plays to keep one within certain bounds.

I wish to express my indebtedness to the librarians of Columbia and Harvard Universities for the unusual facilities placed at my disposal, and in especial my thanks are due to Mr. Frederic W. Erb of Columbia University, whose bibliographical assistance was of great value. In this connection, I wish to record my grateful recognition of the services rendered by my sister, Belle Moses. Other acknowledgments will be found in their appropriate places.

M. J. M.

New York, *November*, 1908.

HENRIK IBSEN

CHAPTER I

THE ENTRANCE OF HENRIK IBSEN

In 1720, a Danish sea-captain, bearing the name of Peter Ibsen, set his face toward Norway and entered the town of Bergen, a seaport on the rugged southwest coast of the Scandinavian peninsula. He hailed from Möen, to the southeast of Zeeland, and the blood of the Vikings flowed in his veins.[1] But no sooner had he become a full citizen of the provincial community than he married a German lady, and by this union Henrik Petersen Ibsen, the great-grandfather of the dramatist, was born.

At the outset we thus note the two prevailing national strains in the family: but a third infusion was to result by the marriage of this son with Wenche Dischington, whose father, a thoroughgoing Scotsman, had settled in Norway for business reasons. The foundations of the Ibsen temperament were therefore somewhat foreign to the native soil of Bergen or of Skien, where the great-grandfather and his wife settled, and where Henrik Ibsen, grandfather

[1] The genealogical chart prepared by Haldane Macfall for his book on Ibsen, while confusing in arrangement, substantially agrees with Jæger's account.

of the famous namesake, entered the world. This representative was of the third generation to follow the sea, and he it was who emulated the example of his grandsire by seeking the hand of a daughter of one Plesner, whose stock was distinctively German.

Unfortunately, after the birth of his only child, the married life of Henrik Ibsen I. was of short duration, for, setting sail in command of his own ship, he was wrecked off Hesnæs, near Grimstad, the vessel foundering with the loss of all on board.

Ibsen's father, Canute (Knud) Henriksen, a merchant by trade, became enamoured of Maria Cornelia Altenburg, whose family was not only of German origin through many uninterrupted generations, but whose father had likewise gone to sea. Thus, upon the entrance of Henrik Ibsen into the world, it is evident that his hereditary endowments were varied; the strain was predominantly German, broken only once by the bequeathment of Scotch characteristics, and based upon a Danish foundation. Norway's claim on him, therefore, is one dependent upon the influence of external environment, for temperament is affected by climatic changes, by social conditions, and by natural and local impressions.

An inventory of this inheritance would therefore account for Ibsen's frugality and his proneness to silence, from the Scotch; for his earnest philosophical tendency, from the Germans; and for his imagination, from the North. His three-sided nationality gave him a certain cosmopolitan taste, at the same time that, once exiled from Norway, it developed in him his sense of aloofness as well as his Scandinavian proclivities. Ibsen's pride in his ancestry was shown

on many occasions. From the Tyrol, he wrote to George Brandes in 1882, correcting statements in the latter's account of him, and indicating that the Ibsen family was one of the most respected in Skien. Ibsen had not lost sight of the fact that Chief Magistrate Paus, who represented the town in the Storthing, was half-brother to his father, as well as being cousin to his mother. Besides which, a point which might not seem important to Brandes, but which Ibsen's pride treasured, he was connected with the Plesners, the Von der Lippes, the Cappelens, and the Bloms, all patrician families of influential standing in the town.

Mr. Gosse speaks of the dead-level persistency, the middle class respectability of the Ibsen family, yet, in a provincial community of a conservativeness which amounted to the strictest Puritanical narrowness, respectability and spiritual worth were measured by the absence of much stimulation or ambition.

On his mother's side, Ibsen inherited his reserve; from his father he drew the keen wit which made the sire popular and feared, and which brought the wrath of nations down upon the head of the son. Ibsen's character, however, was different from that of both parents; his mother was quiet, lovable, sacrificing, with none of the bitterness in her nature which fermented in the soul of her offspring; his father, despite the quick lash of his tongue, was cheerful and noted for his sociability. In fine, this couple was thoroughgoing and content within the narrow boundaries of Skien. Ibsen's ancestry were identified with the two Norwegian towns which figured largely in the first twenty years of his life. Read that

graphic narrative poem of his entitled "Terje Vigen," and it will be realized how thoroughly the sea spirit was ingrained in his being—a love for the free abandon of the waves which he comments upon throughout his letters and in his plays. When he wrote those verses he was probably imagining the tragic fate of his grandfather.

We have thus outlined the human setting for the entrance of Henrik Ibsen. But there is more; there is the physical background which overshadowed the narrowness of Skien and Bergen and Grimstad, which encouraged Ibsen to twilight brooding, and intense struggles through the long nights.[1] One cannot ignore the value of wild fiord and mountain solitude in the make-up of a man. They either quicken in him the love for such legendary lore as runs through "Peer Gynt" or affect him with the varied humours characteristic of "Brand." The temperaments of Ibsen and Björnson are both products of this natural ruggedness, Ibsen dwelling within the continual shadow of sheer rock, Björnson seeking the sunshine of the valley.

The political situation in Norway was likewise of a peculiar temper in the year 1828. The history of modern Scandinavia seems to have comprised hopeless endeavours to unite the three countries under

[1] Of the Norwegians, Ossip-Lourié writes: "La pauvreté du sol lui a imposé le goût des réalités." Jules Lemaître says: "La plupart des Norvégiens vivent sous l'influence d'une nature très dramatique."

The Norwegian people are estimated at length by Garborg in his "Henrik Ibsens Keiser og Galilæer, en Kritish Studie" (1874), quoted in translation by Prof. Julius E. Olson in his edition of "Brand" (1906), Introduction.

one head, but against such a coalition there appeared to be pitted the whole tenor of separate intellectual as well as social ideals. There was something in the Norwegian that was thoroughly democratic, while in the Swedes a strong aristocratic attitude offered them an opportunity of looking down upon their neighbours in superior condescension. Yet the two so far forgot their own individual national instincts as to draw their artistic and spiritual sustenance from Denmark. Therefore, Scandinavian history comprises largely a discussion as to how far Denmark and, more centrally speaking, Copenhagen gripped the peninsular territories to the north. Wherein the three differed we shall see later on.

As a result of the Napoleonic wars, the year 1814 began with Denmark's loss of Norway, which country was at the time resisting the strong efforts to effect some sort of union with Sweden. But, after electing a king, after framing a constitution, the Norwegians found themselves involved in a war with Sweden, whose army was immediately directed across the borders. Then it was that the King of Norway abdicated, and the Storthing, weakened in its national position, was now content to sue for a constitutional union with Sweden. This opposition on the part of Norway was not a stand indicative of a consuming patriotic consciousness, nor was her national sense, however apparent, wholly awakened until the figures of Ibsen and Björnson loomed upon the horizon.[1] At

[1] An excellent critique of Björnstjerne Björnson is contained in Boyesen's "Essays on Scandinavian Literature." (Scribner, 1895.) See also Brandes' "Björnson," included in the same volume with his consideration of Ibsen. See Björnson's article

first glance it would appear that these two were working with the same intent—to make the Norwegians aware of themselves—and this is true to the point where Ibsen's perspective view of the situation made him politically much more in favour of the Scandinavian coalition than Björnson, who was a most ardent democrat.

It is necessary to bear this status in mind; otherwise it is not essential to involve the development of Henrik Ibsen with the political wranglings of the Storthing. He was content to remain outside of the discussions, and if he was at all deeply interested in political matters, they were those larger movements which affected Europe and not alone Norway.

Henrik Ibsen was consistent in his aloofness as regards party politics. But his youth was influenced by the revolution of 1848 much in the way that Wordsworth was gripped by the French Revolution. His patriotism consisted in that nationalism which was the result of intellectual initiative. Being against the idea of the State, he yet contended persistently for those marks of nationality which would distinguish the Norwegian from the Dane, in purity of language, in pride of historical tradition, and in the creative endowments which drew material from the soil. In this respect, therefore, it might be claimed for Björnson and for Camilla Collett, who both wrote of the Norwegian peasant and middle class peoples, that they perhaps realized more practically than Ibsen the value of intimate detail in their literary endeavours; they might be said to have used

on "Norway's Constitutional Struggle." (*Scribner*, 21 : 603, February, 1881.)

their realism to greater artistic advantage, to have harmonized their purpose more effectively with local colour. In his modern social dramas, Ibsen's philosophy nearly always overflowed the limitations of his suburban characters.

The northern nature thrives on factions, and the Norwegians, the Swedes, and the Danes fought over their art canons as well as over their State differences. The land that produced Ibsen and Björnson demanded of Sweden the retention of her national characteristics, and only a conciliatory policy kept matters from open rupture between the two. Norway clamoured for equality; Norway abolished her rank of nobility; Norway applied for a national flag and persisted in doing away with the post of viceroy. The official relations between the conjoined territories depended upon what political faction in Norway—whether Radical or Conservative—was in the ascendency. The sensitive questions involved conflicting points created by the loose wording of a constitution, and by the human suspicion which constitutes the chief characteristic of party warfare.

Upon the entrance of Henrik Ibsen, Norwegian art was exotic; the stage was modelled along Danish lines, the poetry was inspired by Danish examples—culture itself was regarded as counterfeit unless it came from Copenhagen. Norway had ceased to be aware of the significance of the past; her originality lay dormant beneath a slavish dependence and imitation. Nowhere does literary history afford a more interesting struggle for the assertion of independent traits than in the persons of Björnstjerne Björnson, born in 1832, and Henrik Johan Ibsen, born on March 20, 1828

in the little town of Skien. The one was the son of a parish priest, and in his person represented one generation removed from the soil; the other was the son of a merchant, in whose veins flowed the courage of hardy Danes. It was not a thought of class distinction which was to come between the two at a later time, but the distinction was that which exists between the views of a constitutional radical and of an intellectual radical.

The stage setting for Ibsen's birthplace has been very graphically sketched by him; the family dwelling was situated in the centre of the little town and bore the pretentious name of Stockmann House, and it was near all of the important edifices of which the three thousand inhabitants could boast. But the fact that Ibsen's father carried on a brisk merchant's trade indicates that the community, however primitive in some things, was active in commercial ingenuity.

That portion of Skien to be described was in later years totally destroyed by fire, some of the portions familiar to Ibsen being wiped out in 1854, while others went the same way in 1886. Then it was that Ibsen, in his familiar, blunt manner exclaimed, "The inhabitants of Skien were quite unworthy to possess my birthplace."

From the windows of Stockmann House, one could see the church with its tower; while not far from the meeting-house loomed forth the town pillory, the town hall, the lock-up, and the mad-house—a sufficiently gruesome assemblage to grip the mind of any sensitive, reflective boy. Ibsen seemed to resent the fact that this ground-plan was chiefly architectural; probably he accounted for the absence thereafter of

any vivid nature description in his early poetry, by the absence of nature from the streets of Skien; one of these thoroughfares afterwards bore his name. Some of the first sounds that became familiar to the boy's ear were the rush and roar of nearby fosses, and the persistent grating of innumerable saw-mills. "When I read of the guillotine afterwards," Ibsen records, "I always had to think of these saws."

After the church was burned in 1854, through the careless action of a serving maid, it was replaced by a more substantial building, in which stood a baptismal font supported by the figure of an impossible-looking little cherub which became indelibly fixed upon Ibsen's memory, for, in writing to his sister Hedvig as late as 1891, he referred to "the old church with the angel of baptism under the raftered roof."

This retentive memory was not prone to forget the belfry of the church, wherein, tradition held, there roamed a black poodle, with fiery red eyes, who so frightened the night watchman that the poor man fell out of the window; nor did youthful conscience spare the little fellow when, evidently indulging in forbidden sport, he rolled a coin, given him on his christening day, into a crack, and thereafter considered himself a species of criminal fit for the discipline of policeman Tysker.

Thus passed the first four years of Ibsen's life; and then the father, prospering still more, moved his family into a sumptuous house uptown, where, it seems, no small amount of entertainment was done, around Christmas being the signal for open festivities. Now followed the rudiments of education, not

received in the common school under the direction of Beadle Iver Flastrud, who likewise boasted the profession of village barber, nor under Rector Oern, who superintended the Latin school, but presumably under private tutorship. Ibsen grew up in the midst of the usual pranks of village boys, but he does not seem to have had any great inclination to play in normal manner. It pleased him far better to brood over the pillory around which a morbid imagination disported itself, or to look within the grated openings of the dungeon in search of pale and wasted faces, than to join in the healthy exercises of the village scholars.

But there were a few festivities for this unusually moody youth, otherwise his recollections of the balls, musicals, and visiting guests would not have remained so distinct; there was the Fair, with its mysteries of honey-cakes and rope dancers; there was the 17th of May, when the young men of Skien would celebrate with fireworks the adoption of the Norwegian constitution. Then came the night of June 23d, St. John's Eve, with the lighting of bonfires, which burned all the more brightly since they were largely composed of tar barrels begged at the wharves.

The social position of the Ibsen family was, however, soon to be jeopardized, for, when Henrik was but eight years old, an adverse turn of the tide of fortune brought financial ruin to his father. Three characteristics marked the town of Skien; it was ripe soil for the pietistic movement of Pastor Lammers; it had its social castes, the distinction being rigorously maintained; and, moreover, this discrimination was based, as it generally is everywhere, upon a worldly calculation. When, therefore, the stolid aristocracy

of the lumber town heard of the Ibsen reverses, they looked askance, nor did any of the good wives ride out to the suburbs to call at the Venstöb farmhouse, where the family were forced to move. "In consequence," confessed Ibsen, "we got out of touch with the society to which we had until then belonged."

At this point we may begin to note the future dramatist's keen resentment of provincial prejudices: from now on life seemed to offer every opposition to his naturally aristocratic feelings. There were four other children in the family beside Henrik, and, by all accounts, they must have suffered from the vagaries of his nature. One sister remembered him as an "uncomfortable boy" whom they would have to prod into action, and then he would bungle through the games, unless it happened that they were playing fort, when his ingenuity at building and manœuvring was remarkable. He would find especial enjoyment in cutting figures from pasteboard and arranging them in groups, indicative of certain situations, and foreshadowing the playwright's instinct; but from this inclination likewise developed his pronounced artistic tastes which drew him strongly toward painting as a future profession.

Yet notwithstanding all the accounts of his interest in sleight of hand performances, given public exhibition in one of the spare rooms, Henrik Ibsen was first and last a lad of thought, whose larger and more significant life was spent within himself. The schooling received by him from one Johan Hansen, a theologian, was characterized by an austerity which found ready response from the boy, who learned Latin sufficiently well to write some imitative verses, and who

became so engrossed in theology, according to Jæger, that he "would sit for hours with his text-book, hunting up in the Bible the passages referred to." Though radical principles were to be the dominant elements in Ibsen's mature nature, yet there is truth in Nordau's statement that the dramatist's mind could never be wholly rid of its theological crease. By 1843, the boy was confirmed and taken from school.

"Brand" affords one a glimpse of the narrow traits of the Skien community as well as of that officialdom by which religion was regulated. In Peer Gynt's first greeting of his mother Åse, we detect a suggestion of the comfort that once enveloped the Ibsen family in the persons of Rasmus Gynt and "Gold-bag Jon." Reflections of Ibsen's reading tastes at this time are as clearly stated in "The Wild Duck" as are Lamb's own impressions of the Stackhouse Bible in his Elia essays. Gregers asks little Hedvig whether she reads books—Hedvig, the most delicate of all Ibsen children, and coloured with a tender memory of his own sister, the only relative to whom he used to confide his secret hopes and ambitions, and with whom he never entirely lost intercourse. "Oh, yes," replies the child, "when I get the chance. Most of them are English though, and I don't understand English. But then I look at the pictures. There is one great big book called 'Harrison's History of London.' It must be a hundred years old; and there are such heaps of pictures in it. At the beginning there is Death with an hour-glass and a woman." All of these treasures, so Hedvig adds, were left behind by an old sea captain who was drowned.

Thus does art entwine itself about past incidents, disguised however they may be; in subtle manner does imagination grapple with well-nigh forgotten happenings. But the years 1842 and 1843 burned deeply into the soul of Henrik Ibsen; at the age of fourteen he was thrown upon his own resources, and thenceforward began that cleavage between himself and his family which he encouraged because he felt how different his spirit was from theirs, how radical his opinions were as compared with theirs. His parents were not of the character to relent in their disapproval of their son's independence; and Hedvig alone seems to have exerted that wisdom which agrees to disagree, yet, at the same time, to practise tolerance.

Leaving the orchards of Venstöb and returning to Skien, Ibsen alone of his family seems to have been unable to countenance the condescension of the neighbours. Many a line in his early poems bears traces of the smart and sting and the indignities which his sensitiveness dwelt upon and probably over-emphasized; the fermenting spirit was making him restless. Financial meagreness was now to pursue Henrik Ibsen for many years; it was his first encounter with such facts that turned him away from painting as other than a side issue—his father's practical voice for the last time strengthening his son's intentions of obtaining some salaried position. Such employment was not to be had in Skien and Ibsen was glad to turn his back upon a place whose littlenesses furnished food for all his social types in such pieces as "The League of Youth" and "Pillars of Society."

The stoicism of Ibsen's attitude toward his family savours of the egotism of "Brand"; mayhap, toward the end of his life he saw clearly his failure to acknowledge that there was a mean between the world as it is and the world as he would have it. It was not hard-heartedness or indifference that kept him away. His poverty prevented him from sending his parents any aid and so he never wrote to them. No sooner did he seriously contemplate a literary career than this earnestness changed into a consuming belief that his talent, his genius, God-given, should receive consideration over all things else. Like Brand, he must stand alone, tearing from him every thought of parental love, keeping uppermost in his mind the only half-true belief that his radical duty had made him an irreconcilable stranger to his home.

When news reached him at Munich in 1877 of the death of his father, Ibsen wrote to Christian Paus thanking him for his kindness in tones of true appreciation. He outlined the long hard struggle he had had to gain a footing, and in his acceptance of the Paus's consideration of his family, Ibsen revealed his own belief that the universe had so willed others to do as they did do, in order that he might accomplish his predestined work. Never once did he make any strong effort to see his parents; for there always loomed up to prevent him that detestation of the prevailing tendencies in Skien, against which he feared to brush, and which might result, as he seemed to think, in unpleasant consequences. On his first visit to Norway in 1874, after his exile, Ibsen bethought him of Skien, but like Brand, turned his back upon smaller duty, not fully realizing that the true worth

of the larger facts in life is dependent upon the strength of the lesser actions comprising it.

But he had already schooled himself to this hardness of attitude, for his mother had died in 1869, and the repression he had shown in a letter to Hedvig was pitifully evident. "I look into myself," he said, hoping that one would understand; "there is where I fight my battles." Those who would remain in sympathy with him must learn to attribute right motives for those things left undone which the ordinary order of society would require us to do; they must take his word for the declaration that warmth was not lacking in his heart. In family ties, in national interests, he must have a far view; yet even toward Skien he seemed willing to make concessions and to write a letter in 1891 which, in default of an "occasional poem"—a type of verse he had then given up composing—his sister Hedvig might read to the simple citizens at the opening of the new Public Hall. Before the people, this little great man, not averse to honours, wished to flaunt some of his acknowledged worth. To his sister he emphasized his characteristic watchfulness of stormy weather, in whatever land it might be brewing. She had joined the Lammers community, and Ibsen assured her that when the spiritual tornado struck the narrow town from which he had fled, he also had followed the outcome with peculiar satisfaction. No event, with any appreciable significance, could pass without bringing grist to his dramatic mill, and so Lammers permeates the pages of "Brand." There were no compromises in Ibsen's actions; he must either have the Ibsen good or the Ibsen bad, and outside of that, the

world was wrong. This is the spirit in which he wrote Björnson from Rome in 1867: "Do you know that I have entirely separated myself from my own parents, from my whole family, because a position of half-understanding was unendurable to me?"

CHAPTER II

GRIMSTAD DAYS

IBSEN'S struggle began, therefore, when he had scarcely reached the age of sixteen. His course took a south-easterly direction to the town of Grimstad, which was situated on the coast of Skager Rak, between Arendal and Christiansand. The place was even more stagnant than the community he had left; a cluster of little red houses domiciled the five hundred inhabitants who had the appearance of absolute inertia, with no interests to raise them above the petty routine of daily existence. The whole place might be described as a sparse fringe of life between the hills and the sea.

But here there happened to be an apothecary, one Reimann, who needed an apprentice, and into his dark shop young Ibsen passed to face a sorry existence. He never had heard of Keats, who had experienced the same dead hopelessness that he now felt. To C. L. Due's recollections, the biographer is indebted for details of this period.

Ibsen's walk through the town was not inspiring; the sewers opened in the middle of the streets, and at night there were no lamps to give one a hint as to how the road lay. There was constant possibility of lurking danger, and as he passed the houses with their shadeless windows, he could look within and see the families gathered around the bare tables with home-made tallow dips shedding a feeble light over the walls and making dense shadows. Arrived at his place of business, he went into his cheerless room, adjoining that of his employer, and eat his soul out in wretchedness. From this " cell " he would emerge

into the store, with its ceiling so low as to be readily touched from the floor.

Two facts constituted a saving grace in his monotonous existence. Ibsen brought with him his art tastes, which for some time he persisted in cultivating. In 1889, he wrote to Halvorsen, telling of the course he had taken at the Skien Drawing School, and how he had learned oil-painting from a young landscape artist, Mandt, who occasionally came from Telemarken. Then he added: "At Bergen, I did some water-colour painting under the supervision of the late Mr. Losting. After my return to Christiania, I painted a little in oil under the direction of Magnus Bagge. But, in 1860, I began to be much occupied with preparations for writing 'Love's Comedy' and 'The Pretenders,' and thenceforward the art of painting was entirely neglected by me."

His technique seems to have been more or less imitative of the Romantic school, but the deftness of his pencil served him well in cartooning, and later on in sketching; for he designed many of the costumes to be used in the dramas which he mounted while theatre manager.

The Grimstad clerk soon gathered around him a number of friends who willingly made his room at the drug store a rendezvous for Sunday meetings and for long evening talks. The assemblage must have shocked the citizens, for Ibsen began to be considered not quite nice, and people looked askance at him as they passed him by the way. In appearance, he was somewhat uncouth, but beneath the savage manners which he is said to have sedulously cultivated, there

was a certain exuberance that made for fellowship among some temperaments.

Grimstad days were not prosperous times. Due tells how, with Ibsen and Ole C. Schulerud, the three experienced some anxious hours; Ibsen was the one wholly without capital, for the others were more or less comfortably circumstanced, while he even went so far as to go without stockings and without an overcoat, yet never did he suffer any constitutional set-backs as a consequence. In their individual ways, these young men fought their battles for existence. With his artistic endowments, Ibsen added much to the evening's pleasure in the shop; there was either verse making, or the sketching pencil lashed particular citizens in unsparing cartoon. One of these pictures sarcastically ridiculed the man who prided himself on his honours and decorations, a curious state of mind considering Ibsen's later stand on the subject.

Throughout this time, the enduring powers of the youth were marvellously taxed; he never seemed to tire over the day's work, and at night he became noted for the late hours he kept—either in talk, or at his studies, for he was fully determined to attempt his university examinations. Perhaps it was well for Henrik Ibsen that he could not gain entrance into the small but exclusive society, even though Due and Schulerud were of excellent standing. Their friendship meant much to the lonely boy; it was to them that he used to read his verses, and they each could boast of having had a hand in his first literary ventures.

These effusions were written in the usual romantic style which draws upon intimate personal emotions.

Under the pseudonym of "Brynjolf Bjarme," Due persuaded Ibsen to send his lines on "Autumn" to the *Christianiaposten*. When the newspaper sheet containing the cold type was brought to him, his face paled and he was somewhat staggered, but no sooner had he become accustomed to the sensation than he wrote another poem, "When I saw my first in print." As yet the pure novelty of being alive had only touched his feelings; art took the happy form of "Springtime Memories," which Due set to music; and "The Skald in Valhalla," composed at the time of Oehlenschläger's death, would indicate that the young poet was particularly drawn to him and to his romantic spirit. For the Danish writer, actor, professor, playwright, and poet was a pioneer, in so far as he drew literary Denmark away from the classicism of Holberg, and turned attention to the Eddas and Sagas of Scandinavia; his poems are full of nature love, his tragedies coloured with romance. Ibsen's "Catilina" bears the same characteristic traits, although the spirit prompting it was too original to be completely imitative. However, his early poems bear evidence of the Danish influence.

Due records that during these years Ibsen's religious belief was far from orthodox, in fact it drew its sustenance from Voltaire's deism. His friends argued with him, but to no avail, and probably his defection from the conventional ideas, if it may so be called, helped to cast upon him the queer looks of people and caused them to skirt around him as he passed. Like all youth at a certain age, he possessed strong ideas on marriage, which were far removed from those he practised when the actual time arrived.

But he was just ripe for the turbulent period of 1848, which swept over him with great force, drawing from him an outburst of resentment against the lack of initiative amongst the Norwegians, and helping to develop his ideas as to the duties of the individual and the state.

His was not the nature to abide by the decrees of kings and princes. The revolution of 1848 served to change Ibsen into a republican; he was soon ready to join in speech against any and every form of popular oppression; he wrote sonnets to King Oscar, pointing to the duty of Scandinavia to unite in the war which centred about Sleswick-Holstein and involved Denmark, Prussia, and Germany. Another appeal was sent under the title of "Scandinavians, Awake!"[1] meaning that only by assisting Denmark could Norway and Sweden ever hope to keep his regard. Many points resulted therefrom. This general upheaval in the centre of Europe drove Ibsen from Grimstad to Christiania, and thence eventually into voluntary exile; he considered the defeat of Denmark as Norway's disgrace, as an indication of Norway's lack of will to act, as a poverty in that racial feeling which should always link people together. His conscience was beginning to make him realize that his people at home were not sensible on the one hand to any national pride, and on the other to any realization of what modern changes were taking place among the middle classes of the world about them. But, while Ibsen was talking Republicanism

[1] An essay on Johan Sebastian Cammermeyer Welhaven [by W. M. P.] is in "Warner's Library of the World's Best Literature." See especially translation of poem, "The Revolution of 1848."

among his friends, he was also evolving in his mind some large work which would embody these consuming views; he was likewise so far relenting as to wear a dress suit; and, so it is told of him by a certain lady, despite his shyness, he consented to put himself under her care and to be taught to dance. Peer Gynt's arrival at the Hegstad farmhouse savours of this incident. It is even said of him that on one occasion he condescended to sing a song, his voice wandering in untuneful ways, despite the fact that his ear for melody was acute.

This was the mental and worldly condition of Ibsen when he turned toward Christiania; he had formed strong associations with Due and Schulerud, who preceded him to the city, and twice, in tributes which Ibsen's nature was not prone to scatter broadcast, his deep sense of gratitude found expression. "If friendship were dependent on a continuous intercourse," so he wrote to Due around 1851, "then it would be all over between us; but if it be dependent on sympathy and the flight of spirit within the same sphere, then our friendship can never die." So thought he a second time when he went into voluntary exile, and a third time when the preface to the jubilee edition of "Catilina" (1875) was printed; his pledge remained unbroken in renewed recognition.

He did not seek Christiania without being intent on the approaching examinations. In preparation, it is claimed that his prose composition was superintended by Paul Jansenius Stub of Bergen,[1] who

[1] In the German edition to Ibsen's works (vol. 1, edited by Brandes, Elias, and Schlenther), there is included a review by him: "Paul Stub als Theatre Kritiker (1851)."

gave him lessons by correspondence and who afterwards boasted that "he taught the boy to write." In 1851, Ibsen considered him as a theatre critic in a paper of some length. Then he was further strengthened in his Latin by a Mr. Monrad, the university having selected as the subject for quizzing "The Conspiracy of Catiline," as determined in the history of Sallust and in the oration of Cicero.

Mental condition is thus affected by chance occurrence. When he reached Christiania, Ibsen was already the author of many lyrics and had completed a rough sketch of a one-act drama entitled "The Normans," which afterwards became "The Warrior's Tomb." This subject, together with the contemplated composition of a romance, "The Prisoner at Akershus,"[1] which never materialized, likewise indicate how close his inspiration was to Oehlenschläger's influence. Besides which, emulating the Dane to a further degree, he was contemplating a tragedy about Olaf Trygvesön (1849-1850), which Mr. Gosse believes might have been "Olaf Liljekrans," begun in Grimstad also. The apothecary's clerk never could be accused of creative inaction.

His friends, who were already ahead of him when he reached Christiania, had in their possession long before this a much more important bit of information than the fact that his indignation had overflowed in verse with the defeat of the Magyars during August, 1849; they were both intent upon other hap-

[1] One chapter and part of second written. See J. B. Halvorsen, 1898, No. 52, 53. *Ringeren*. Also letter to Schulerud dated Grimstad, January 5, 1850. Consult also, in German translation of Ibsen's poems, "Auf Akershus."

penings in the apothecary's shop at Grimstad, for Ibsen had whispered it to Schulerud a year before and he had in turn confided it to Due, that in the long hours of the night, a tragedy was being written, with Catiline as the chief figure. Considering the tenor of the times and the youthful response of Ibsen to Republicanism, it was hardly likely that this Roman anarchist should not be made to utter some of Ibsen's own revolutionary ideas, that he should not be depicted with a certain sympathetic largeness that tended to throw all sympathy in the balance for individualism, rather than for a senate-ridden government.

Very probably more attention was bestowed upon "Catilina" during the last year in Grimstad than upon the examination, as the results of the latter will show. There were many dramatists in Germany who were selecting the same subject as Ibsen, prompted also by the revolution of 1848,[1] but up in Norway there was little chance of his seeing any but the Latin originals he was studying, even though some believe he may have heard of Dumas's play produced in the Fall of 1848. However faithfully he drew material from both sources, the vigour of his imagination and the spontaneous enthusiasm of his youth infused a personal value which overbalances the historical. Regarding these days, Ibsen always spoke with pleasure. There is some remark about his own "Catilina"

[1] The reader is referred to the following interesting pamphlet: "Katilina in Drama der Weltliteratur: Inaugural Dissertation." By Hermann B. G. Speck. (Leipzig, 1906.) [References to Ibsen are to be found on pp. 23-27; individual pieces dealing with the subject of Catiline, p. 46. Topics are discussed in relation to the Revolution of 1848.]

in his letter of 1870 to Hansen: "The play was written in a provincial town, where it was impossible for me to give expression to all that fermented in me except by mad, riotous pranks, which brought down upon me the ill-will of all the respectable citizens, who could not enter into that world I was wrestling with alone."

When the time arrived for the writing of the "fair-copy," Due made it in a wonderful, clear script,[1] while Schulerud, who seems to have possessed some spare money of his own, set off toward Christiania with the manuscript under his arm. This was in September, 1849. There is no describing the agony experienced by Ibsen, left in Grimstad during the interim; what to him seemed to be an interminable time elapsed without a word as to the fate of his manuscript, and he then wrote a letter, full of ill-temper and impatience, to Schulerud, who was sufficiently familiar with his comrade's moods to understand his irritability. Then Ibsen repented of his haste; and Schulerud's next act was still more a test of his deep interest in this venture.

The play was offered to the Christiania Theatre[2] as being by "Brynjolf Bjarme," but in view of the theatre situation then existent in Norway, it was speedily declined; it was likewise refused by the pub-

[1] See reproduction of pages from original manuscript—Lothar (1902), p. 12, insert.

[2] Halvorsen mentions a production of "Catilina" at Stockholm, December 3, 1881. The play was published in 1850; a second edition, Kbhvn, 1875; a third edition, Kbhvn, 1891. In translation, note A. Johnstone's version of the first act, for "Translations from the Norse." A German rendering was made by Hugo Greinz, 1896.

lisher to whom it was offered. These two defeats indicate—regardless of the crudities contained in "Catilina"—how little confidence Norwegians displayed in native material; and, in recollection, maybe, of this time, Ibsen, in talk with Hegel, the publisher, at a later day, blamed his country for the manner in which her young and promising authors were driven to Denmark, their first works usually bearing the imprint of Copenhagen.

When the play was finally published in 1850, Schulerud, who defrayed the expenses and was general literary sponsor to the venture, and his young author-friend were not immediately overpowered by the rapidity with which the edition was sold; for tradition treasures up the information that only thirty-two copies were disposed of, the rest being utilized as wrapping paper by a kind grocer near by. Thus "Catilina" was forgotten by everyone but Ibsen himself, who waited until the twenty-fifth anniversary of his matriculation and of his entrance into authorship, when he wrote Hegel from Dresden (November 23, 1874), proposing to revise his old manuscript[1] and to issue it as a species of sidelight upon his character. He realized its immaturity; at the same time he never lost sight of its good qualities both in spirit and in freshness of verse.

With that almost studied attitude which he assumed toward himself—an aloof and conscious view of his own development—he told Hegel that those

[1] Mr. Archer, explaining why he omitted "Catilina" from his edition, gives as an important reason that in 1875 Ibsen so changed the text, in order to obliterate its crudities of style, that the manuscript lost its biographical value—which is its chief value.

critics were right who closely connected "Catilina" with the crisis of his life at this period. His publisher readily agreed, with characteristic graciousness, to Ibsen's plan—not only to reissue the youthful drama, but also to have him prepare for it an analytical preface, which should give the piece its proper autobiographical setting. This willingness on Hegel's part was probably a concession, for he was averse, as we shall see, to Ibsen's examination of himself. "I should make no change in the thoughts and ideas," says the author, with that tone which plainly assumes that such a change might disturb the continuity of his development which he desired to trace, "only in the language in which they are expressed; the verse is, as Brandes has remarked, bad." It is hardly possible, as Ibsen claims, that this deficiency in style was due to the rough draft, which in the early days had gone to the printer without his final supervision, but more likely to a certain immaturity which could only be changed through long and diverse experience.

But he was right in the assertion that it represented his state of unrest in 1849; that, in the person of Catiline, he infused some of his own ideals, some of his own conceptions of a liberty which had not yet grown into a full-blooded individualism, but which stood forth in almost heroic proportions, from the midst of petty state and local conditions. In the yearnings of Catiline we detect the ambitions of the poet, who used to confide his dreams of the future to his sister during their walks around Skien, and who, like Catiline, would willingly die after having once gained the heights.

The study of Sallust and Cicero, nevertheless, while it afforded Ibsen a solid background, did not prevent him from altering the situations according to his temperament. Personality moulds details in its own way. Ben Jonson gave us a "Catiline," and his Elizabethan ornateness, together with his method of character-unfolding, lacked the clear directness of history and made the most of unessential details for the sake of poetry. Dumas, whose drama on the subject appeared in Paris while Ibsen was writing his at Grimstad, aimed for and successfully gained the intensity of melodrama, better suited to a Robespierre than to a Roman; nor was he as careful of facts as Jonson, who drew from Cicero, Sallust and Plutarch. It is of little consequence how much of this literary situation was familiar to Ibsen; no evidence points to his ever having read Jonson, and, though his "Catilina"[1] is full of resemblances to Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar" and "Coriolanus," Jæger is authority for the statement that thus early Ibsen had no knowledge of the English dramatists.

"Many things and much upon which my later work has turned"—says the author in his preface to the new edition—"the contradiction between endowment and desire, between capacity and will, at once the entire tragedy and comedy of mankind and of the individual—may here be dimly discerned." This psychological determination of how far "Catilina" measured Ibsen is hardly essential, nor would

[1] I have considered this play from the French translation made by Le Vte. De Colleville and F. de Zepelin; and from the German translation by Christian Morgenstern.

it bring much fruitful result other than that it was immature, like himself. At any rate, as it represented him then, and as it established in his technical method an almost stereotyped theatric subterfuge and situation which he often resorted to, the play is worth recording in some detail.

The development of the plot shows the hand of the zealous student, who has not yet conceived narrative in the terms of action, but who has a full amount of sympathy for his characters, and does justice to them in the manner he has conceived them. It is characteristic of his method of treating historical data, that, while never falsifying them, Ibsen was accustomed, as all artists are, to accentuate what best suited his individual purpose. Thus, while we are made aware of the licentiousness of Catiline, our whole sympathy is engaged in the struggle carried on by a man whose better nature, always to the fore, is yet unable to dominate his darker side.[1]

Into a Roman conception, Ibsen has poured the hardihood of the North; his Furia is much nearer the heroic figure of Hiördis, the Saga heroine, than like the Roman women of Shakespeare; Aurelia's delicacy is the artistic contrast which offsets intense shadow by light. Ibsen's triangular plots were nearly all conceived in the same mould, and the situation here dealt with, where the nature of Catiline is torn between two women typifying his two-sided inclination, appears again in "The Vikings at Helgeland,"

[1] See Valfrid Vasenius: In his analysis of "Catilina," according to Jæger, Vasenius tries to prove that, through intuition, Ibsen has reached the true conception of the Roman's character. Consult the Latin authorities.

where the struggle has the same dynamic value, but where the clash becomes double.

The opening words in "Catilina" reveal Ibsen, the revolutionary, speaking through the Conspirator, whose repression, whose dignity is never once sacrificed to the ranting of youthful polemics. "You must, you must! From the depths of my soul, a voice commands. I shall obey! Have I no longer the energy nor the desire to reach this noble end and to do away with my miserable existence?" These are the words of the apothecary's clerk at Grimstad, whose employer was more intent upon profit and loss than upon iambics; the meaning in the lines was prophetic in view of Ibsen's social ostracism. He conceives his Catiline in terms of himself; they both longed for the good which is in danger of being swallowed up by the false; they both are regarded askance, though their thoughts are of the highest and their strength is only waiting the test.

Who in the Norway of that day would understand the idealism of Ibsen, which he infused into Catiline? In Grimstad, as in Rome, there were those who regarded ambition only as worth while when estimated by the measure of money standards. Catiline joins the young malcontents who are plotting to overthrow a grasping senate, in turn themselves to grasp what is not theirs the instant they are in power. "Civil liberty and the good of all" was Catiline's cry, however. And his ambition and sincerity are of that height which measures Ibsen's own outlook upon his poetic talents. "Oh, if only for a short instant," is Catiline's plea, "as a brilliant star, I was able to burn before going out! Oh, if only for a short while,

it was possible for me, by some heroic act, to render immortal, yea, legendary, the name of Catiline! Right gladly then would I give up everything after such a victory."

This is the pardonable overflow and exuberance of youth. Catiline almost lacks an element of worldliness, and instead of the tyranny of the seasoned plotter, he exhibits the contriteness of a regenerated spirit that cannot escape the consequences of his past. Ibsen's republicanism is not, therefore, so evident in utterance as in attitude. He adds to Catiline a moral consideration which history does not give him; the Conspirator here is not a pest to society, but the one brave figure in whom is typified the patriot desiring to make Rome whole again; he is not the selfish dictator or the murderer of history, but a noble character who forgives treachery when his designs are betrayed, and who is willing to make sacrifices for others.

In construction, the play is lavish with its distribution of scene. Catiline is first introduced on a hillside without the walls of Rome. Here he dreams of all his secret aspirations, and here it is that he tells the Ambassadors from Gaul to what pass the once noble city has fallen; how egoism and arbitrariness rule; how equity and justice are bartered for the sake of unrighteous power and ill-gotten gold. Then the scene shifts to a portico in Rome, where a group of young politicians bemoan their poverty, while Manlius, a seasoned warrior of Sylla's victories, stands by, bereft unjustly of position and fortune. The temper of this group is ripe for insurrection, based less on high-mindedness than on personal bene-

fit. They turn to Catiline for leadership. But he hastens instead to the temple of Vesta, where Furia, one of the attendants, confronts him; he braves the streets of Rome, despite the danger to his life, because there is a peculiar fascination about this woman, whose sister has been ruined by him. When she discovers that he is the man who has betrayed the honour of that sister, she vows vengeance on him for his crime, at the same time combating the love which she, herself, has for him. It is Furia who shows him the vista of possible greatness, who tempts him to his ruin, who poisons his mind when he would respond to his human side.

The action again shifts to the house of Catiline, where, haunted by Furia's idea of the Nemesis which hovers over his head, his wife, gentle, watchful, and loving, undoes the dark work of this other woman's opposing influence by throwing in the balance the weight of her conjugal love. The final scene to this first act shows a subterranean vault into which erring vestal maids are thrust for punishment, and from which Furia is saved by a boy lover, whom Ibsen develops for his dramatic need, instead of having Catiline kill his own son, as in real history he did. Escaped from death, Furia now wanders in the wake of Catiline, drawing, luring him on with a peculiar thirst, so different from Hedda's desire to control a human life, yet of the same heedless tenacity as such a woman would have who can hate, love, glory in her power, and at the same time long to see power in others.

These are the motives developed by Ibsen in scene after scene. With the hand of the novice, he resorts

to the weakest form of psychological analysis—the externalizing of mental states, the indiscriminate use of the supernatural—which lacks the romantic glow of reality, and is less subtle than it is elementary. Catiline in this play is a man of conscience; the gentleness of Aurelia makes him realize what he has been in days gone by, and carries him to that point where he would fly with her and dwell only in her love, instead of heading the young conspirators.

But Furia develops in Catiline the man of action, makes him shudder over a lethargic existence with his wife, akin to death, and, by picturing the debauchery of his past, pushes him to ambitious schemes. "I am only the image of thy soul," she tells him, and later she adds, "Night is our kingdom; in the midst of darkness we reign," a statement which zealous commentators always note, believing it reflects Ibsen's long nights in the apothecary room, the only uninterrupted time he had for his writing.

The greatness of Catiline, as Ibsen sees him, is thus retarded by the malleability of his nature through the scheming of one woman and through the love of another. He is sometimes sacrificed in order the better to bring Furia's temper into high light. At one moment he is intent on saving the spirit of solidarity which has deserted the people of Rome; he would break the chains which keep them naught but bondmen and raise their greatness from the dust; at another he is as quickly changed to inaction by the pale beauty of Aurelia.

Catiline is far nobler than those who gather round his standard; his vengeance is that of a man denied his desire, and spurned by those no better in rank

than he, perhaps not so honest in citizenship as himself. And when he is finally won over from Aurelia by Furia, who forces him to do battle, he cries: "Vengeance! Yes, that is the word; that is my device, my war cry. Bloody vengeance! Vengeance for all my hopes and all my dreams that a hateful destiny has destroyed! Vengeance, vengeance for my broken life."

The value of Aurelia's love is purely romantic; it serves to deter the onslaught of Furia's conflicting love and hate; it enters his dreams to offset the restless turmoil of the other. Ibsen has spoiled the dignity of the last act by the indiscriminate use of phantoms to draw Catiline's agony to a close. "He is the only man in the midst of this miserable band of degenerates and criminals," declares the commander with the insurrection army in Etruria; yet one cannot reconcile this strength of bearing with the general instability and indefiniteness of his object, as traced by Ibsen.

The psychology of atonement for his past is very indistinct in the portrayal of Catiline; the workings of his feelings up to the point where the dagger is thrust into Aurelia's breast, as well as into his own, are confusedly indicated, and culminate in the usual scene of restored love and understanding before death puts a seal upon the two. Furia is left unaccounted for, and silently disappears; showing a lack of technical skill, to my mind, since, had she been of organic, rather than of theatric, use, her personality would not have been so unessential at the close.

This ending, however, is indicative of an Ibsen characteristic. We will find in "Brand" and in

"Peer Gynt" the same romantic glorification of love that here lifts the gloom, bringing peace to the soul. The play closes with the rising of the sun as it does in "Ghosts," and Catiline's final conquest over Furia, if it may so be called, is somewhat like Hiördis's separation from Sigurd at the end of "The Vikings at Helgeland." After death, destiny separates them.

On the whole, "Catilina" is crude, and its only great interest is personal; in expression it is somewhat commonplace, though its verse cannot be judged in translation. Thus early has Ibsen worked the old saga groupings, in his contrasts of Furia and Aurelia, in their contending love for Catiline. But however artificial the methods, Ibsen was, in a youthful way, struggling very creditably to make an intensive character study. Jæger says:

"There is no question of real counter-play, for not one of Catiline's opponents appears in the cast; action is reduced to a minimum and dramatic situations are almost wanting. . . The conflict is altogether an internal one, and the development occurs only in Catiline's soul, yet it is not wholly without dramatic interest."

Considering the inexperience and unrest in Ibsen, the play exhibits a wonderful amount of restraint; one French critic called it, in fact, objective in its handling, and the composition of a man who was master of himself, as far as knowing what he wanted to do with what he had learned from Sallust and Cicero. It certainly exhibited a sparse inventive power, which never became largely developed. Situations from play to play are all reminiscent, and most of his

women characters of the future bear some kinship to Aurelia and to Furia. The text, even in translation, carries evidence of Ibsen's unfamiliarity with much literature. He was always to be at a certain disadvantage because of the lack of a generous education.

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIANIA

When Ibsen reached Christiania in 1850, he immediately entered the famous school of Heltberg, where students were "crammed" for examination. Here he was first brought into contact with Björnson and Jonas Lie. As usual, he found Schulerud staunch and true, willing to share his last penny with him; and had it not been for his friends, it is doubtful how Ibsen would have fared. Little is known of his personal condition during these days; from March until August he applied himself assiduously to his studies, not, however, without finding time to put the finishing touch to his new one-act play, "The Warrior's Tomb," which was completed during May. This same month, an adventurous fellow by the name of Harring, who had come to Norway from Denmark with the glow of Greek freedom in his heart, and who had written an over-bold play entitled "The Testament of America," was banished from the country; he was hastily seized by the police and put aboard a vessel. Ibsen and Björnson both signed their names to a protest which was made against this act, and which failed to bring the desired results, although Harring had the empty satisfaction of receiving a deputation and of hearing the cheers from his ardent sympathizers.

The examination report which was signed by J. S. Welhaven, the poet, and dated September 3, 1850, indicates that Ibsen failed in his mathematics and his Greek; nor does it appear that he received sufficent encouragement to prepare himself for re-examination.[1]

[1] A reproduction of Welhaven's report is to be found in Lothar (1902), p. 18, insert.

The times were ripe to fire the mind of a youthful literary man; Ibsen saw around him a growing want for a real National Literature; and there were some few who were making a brave fight to accomplish this end. Even the name of Welhaven on his university card must have brought strongly to his mind "The Twilight Feud," which had significant bearing upon the future of Norwegian Poetry. In addition to this, Ibsen and Schulerud gathered around them a group of young men, intellectually alive to the importance of this transition stage.[1] There was Aasmund Vinje, of peasant birth, nationalist to so great an extent as to champion a patois tongue in all writing, sceptic to such a degree that truth was only relative, and had, at all stages, to undergo change; and yet who, despite aggressiveness, was ready for retreat at any time, as Peer Gynt was. Such a man would readily gain Ibsen's sympathy, for he, also, was a sceptic of twenty-two; when he became older, and Nationalism faded before the larger dream of Scandinavianism, then he became directly opposed to the theories of his young companion, who was ten years his senior.

Then there was Paul Botten-Hansen, the bookworm of the group, who instilled into Ibsen some of

[1] I would refer the reader to the following: "Norway. Official Publication for the Paris Exhibition, 1900." Sten Konow and Karl Fischer. Christiania, 1900. [An interesting report containing special chapters on history, political conditions, social conditions, ecclesiastical organization, language, education, literature, the press, the arts.] "Denmark, Norway, and Sweden." W. Eleroy Curtis. Saalfield Publishing Co., 1903. [Special chapters on Christiania, government and politics; famous Norwegians.]

his *blasé* attitude toward life and at the same time introduced him to the works of Ludvig Holberg, whom Ibsen afterwards declared he never tired of reading. There are two views to take of the friends that the young man drew around him; only charm and the strength of personality could have won from them the untiring support which Ibsen always had from them—Schulerud, Botten-Hansen, Björnson, and later, Hegel and Brandes—groups that meant everything, materially and intellectually, to his future development. Critics say that to Botten-Hansen Ibsen owes some of the satire of "Love's Comedy"; undoubtedly the former was in a position to attract the admiration of a struggling author who had not yet determined what he was to do in years to come. From 1850 to 1860, Botten-Hansen was the centre of a learned and literary circle known as "The Dutchmen," and in this way Ibsen was brought in touch with many of the most brilliant minds in Norway.

One more person needs to be named in order to complete the editorial staff of "The Man"—Abildgaard, a wild figure, who might in these days be regarded as an anarchist, but who to his friends was only an ultra-republican, whose one idea was to upset the rule of king and have a democracy instead. He was heart and soul pledged to the labour movement which had been set in motion by Marcus Thrane, and through the incendiary character of his work, he came near involving Ibsen in a conflict with the law. Abildgaard lived in the same house, and his room was raided by the police on July 7, 1851; the young men had time to conceal some of the papers scattered

about, among which probably there were some mild opinions of Ibsen. Searching the room, nothing was found to throw suspicion upon the latter, although his socialist companions suffered imprisonment.

Jæger gives a full account of "The Man," which in intent was semi-political, occupying a middle course for a while, but showing finally a much further leaning toward opposition, than the opposing party itself. For, says Jæger, "the Norwegian opposition in the Storthing of 1851 was . . . the weakest and most tractable opposition in the world." Ibsen's disgust over these political conditions was expressed in his musical tragedy, "Norma; or, A Politician's Love," which was a burlesque of Bellini's opera. But it seems that, notwithstanding the revolutionary ardour of the youthful editors of "The Man," the paper was not as savage in tone as they intended to make it. Probably their enthusiasm was checked by the fate of Abildgaard; more likely Botten-Hansen, the student, held impulsiveness at bay. The name was soon changed to the "Andhrimner," and it ran for only a short while afterwards. Ibsen's contributions all indicate imitations. "He has come," writes Jæger, "under the influence of the study of literature."

In November, 1851, Ibsen was ready to leave for Bergen, but before then there were certain influences at work which bear directly upon his career. The conditions of the theatre in Norway were critical, confidence in native talent, native ability being at the lowest ebb. For many years the national instinct was gathering strength for recognition. From 1834 to 1838 there had been a struggle between Henrik

Wergeland[1] and Sebastian Welhaven in their efforts each to establish a school of poetry. The former, who was the author of an all-embracing epic entitled "Creation, Man and the Messiah," flaunted a wild revolutionary style, loose in construction, independent of models, perhaps native in tone, but lacking restraint; the latter was more formal, more well-balanced; Gosse compares his genius with the poise and cultured precision possessed by Matthew Arnold; his style was subject to the refinement which indicated Danish influence and which well exemplified his own contention that a national literature "cannot be created out of nothing; that to promote this development it is absolutely necessary to continue the associations which have hitherto been common to both Norway and Denmark, and thus to keep in rapport with the general literature of Europe."

The feud that followed was characteristic of Norway; the people separated into parties, and accusations were thrown from one to the other. Said one: Wergeland's genius is kept up by brandy; said another, Welhaven is receiving bribes from Copenhagen. Yet beneath the superficial recriminations there was a vital principle at stake; in a blind fashion, Norway was seeking to free herself from Danish influence.

This fight for Nationalism was bound to result in such ungovernable independence as Wergeland exhibited; on the other hand, it was natural that it should likewise call for the academic side of Wel-

[1] Through Wergeland's national enthusiasm the 17th of May was adopted as a national holiday. Wergeland's party was known as the "ultra-Norwegian"; Welhaven's party as the "Intelligence."

haven's critical ability. These two men were aware of the awakening of national consciousness; one wished to break wholly with Danish tradition, the other was conservative, and it was with the conservative that Ibsen's sympathies lay, even though "The Twilight Feud" had long ceased to be an active influence when he began to write. Even Denmark was aware of the rich tradition of Norway, for Oehlenschläger himself had once proposed that Norse mythology be used instead of the Greek by all Scandinavian writers. In this spirit, we find him dealing with "Hakon Jarl," a period when Christianity was first introduced into Norway, and with "The Gods of the North." [1]

There was, in 1851, when Ibsen went to assume control of the theatre at Bergen, another phase of the subject of nationalism—that which applied to creative dramatic art in Norway, for, between the year of independence and this time, there were but two names that had received any prominence, one, Henrik A. Bjerregaard, who had composed an opera, and the other, Wergeland, whose farcical attempts were receiving consideration more because of his personal prominence than because of their inherent merit. This art stagnation was largely due to the fact that nearly every movement in Norway was somehow involved with politics. Even "The Twilight Feud" had split into "parties"; and, moreover, it must be

[1] The reader is referred to W. M. Payne's account of Adam Gottlob Oehlenschläger, in the "Library of the World's Best Literature"; also to the same writer's account of Johan Sebastian Cammermeyer Welhaven, in the same collection. Consult Horn's "Scandinavian Literature" (1884), pp. 294-299. For those familiar with the language, Jæger's Danish Literature is invaluable.

remembered that Welhaven himself, as one of the faculty at the University of Christiania, was intent on preserving some of the Danish characteristics.

The balance of intellectual inclination, therefore, pointed toward Copenhagen; however much Norwegians might go to see the farces of Wergeland, they did not consider that actor of any importance who had not received a training in the Danish theatre, or who was not himself a Dane. This was carried to such an extent that the Christianians, and the people of Bergen even, were partial to the diction of Copenhagen; society aped the manner of the Danish capital. So that in the theatre, in the university, in the home, the cultural taste did not take to the national movement; it was only in the Storthing that the parties wrangled over the name.

The ground-work of Ibsen's intellectual life was laid in this atmosphere. The literary world, as far as he was concerned, ended where Copenhagen ended. He was familiar with Oehlenschläger; and Botten-Hansen had initiated him into the comedy-spirit of Holberg; he was ignorant of the world-literature and his native environment was provincial. But his intellectual assets were more than this. If we consider the unrest of his mind, and the dissatisfaction of the times, we can explain much in the character of Henrik Ibsen, as he was about to leave for Bergen. And it is interesting to note in his fugitive poems and initial dramas the acquirement of certain tones which were never to desert him, however much they might alter in intensity.

Between 1847 and 1851, there are not more than twenty-six of his poems preserved, and these are

chiefly indications of his youthful moods. After a man has achieved, then we are constantly trying to build his greatness up by gathering together the strands of his past. The verses entitled "Resignation" are not so remarkable for a youth of his temperament; it is easy to develop a sceptic out of a boy, and Ibsen's training threw him upon his own resources very early in life, when those resources were scarcely evident. Therefore, it is natural that he should have questioned the future poetic success of his muse. Perhaps, like the waves in his poem, "By the Sea" (1848), his whole effort to create will break against the cliff, and disperse, leaving no trace behind! In "Doubt and Hope" (1848), we find his soul steeped in a night of terror; the storm rages and beats against his mind in the form of endless questioning as to his faith.

"The Sources of Memory" (1849), in a way, forebodes the future attitude of Falk in "Love's Comedy"; it is the typical mood of the inexperienced, whose ideal love for an ideal being surpasses any possible realization, and the memory of which is greater than the actuality. Many and many times over does Ibsen cling to this idea with a certain happy melancholy. When he bids farewell to Schulerud in a song (1849), his consolation is that memory cannot rob him of what has already been. The observation of nature in "The Harvest-Season" or "Autumn" piece brings to him the same consuming thought; the plaintive song of the wind, and the pathetic picture of falling leaves cannot alter the memory of a summer freshness. "Spring Time," for which Due wrote the music, vibrates the same

chord. Scarcely twenty-two, yet Ibsen has already bethought him to depend on that within himself which is immutable. His joy of life, his song of thanksgiving are more to him as a memory than as a reality.

In part these poems indicate a poverty of healthy imagination; there is no elasticity, no rebound, but a settled attitude, a Byronic old-age of youth. Continuing his fascinating regard of the gruesome, Ibsen tried his hand at a dismal description of "The Dance of Death": the graveyard, the moonlight, the headstones, and the hour of midnight, such is the local colour. Ibsen seems wilfully to avoid the cheerful aspects; even in nature, he prefers during an "Autumn Evening" (1849) to hear the rain beating against the window and to bethink him of his heart's ideal.

His romanticism also is fraught with a similar fascination for the sombre; he may conjure up the sea by moonlight, or sketch an evening stroll in the forest—there is always some blot on the landscape, his eye sees a disfigurement, his ear catches the hoot of a far-off owl in the stillness. But he appears content with such sadness, for he sings:

> "Here in this wild and stormy place
> My soul at last finds rest,
> And here to me seems Nature's face
> Reflected from my breast."[1]

The other aspects to be detected in these poems[2]

[1] Tr., Payne in Jæger.

[2] See "Ein Nachtrag zu den Gedichten" in Henrik Ibsen's Sämtliche Werke . . . von Georg Brandes, Julius Elias, Paul Schlenther. [Vol. 1.] The translations are made by Emma Klingenfeld, Ludwig Fulda, Max Bamberger. See also Jæger's biography.

have already been commented upon indirectly; there was his political indignation expressed over Norway's lukewarm attitude toward Denmark in 1848; there was his interest in the national revival which was largely furthered in him by his reading of Oehlenschläger and which is to be found in his poem "To the Norwegian Skalds" (1849); therein he asks the significant question why they persist in centring their attention on Northern nature, forgetting that Norway has a human heart; the native singer must draw life from the native soil. This attitude is one which indicates the dramatist's tastes; for, even though "Brand" and "Peer Gynt" and "When We Dead Awaken" dwell much upon mountain scenes, still, Ibsen's characteristic tendency was to contemplate the heart of man rather than the heart of nature, save in so far as it had its psychological bearing upon one's development.

Thus early in life Ibsen's moods were crystallizing his ardour, or more properly speaking encrusting it, because, on a very few rare occasions it would spurt through in surprising strength, indicating a delight at being free, even though late in life. Ibsen did not seek the healthiest out of youth, no more so than Falk, who was constantly sceptical as to the validity of joy. Peer Gynt threw himself heartily into the romp and frolic at Hegstad; Falk always looked at the brilliancy with somewhat of a sneer as to the hollowness of life. You may criticise this as the Byronic youthfulness of Falk; it was the picture indeed of Ibsen, such a lad as would gaze upon a throng described in his "Ball-room Memories" and ponder on their aims in life. Rather than give himself up

to the spirit of the moment, it suited him better to draw some figure from that dancing throng and talk with him thus.

"What is it that animates all these joyous and smiling faces? They have come hither expecting contentment and pleasure; have they found what they sought? Does not the ball rather present an ideal picture of the great drama of human life? And what is this ideal? Anticipation, hope, and disappointment! In these three words behold the whole story of human life!"[1] And in this same piece he falls to dreaming of his heart's ideal; he places his arm around the slim substance of a shadow, unconscious of the many actualities, and when he awakens to the music and to the brilliant lights, the hideous reality makes him thankful that his vision is safe in his memory.

This sarcasm in its incipiency, these romantic paroxysms were fortunately consigned to paper only on rare occasions; they in no way presage the stature of the future playwright; they are ordinary and unoriginal in sentiment. But they are a fair indication of his intimate cast of thought at the moment; they point to his being alive to the issues of the day; and what saved the Ibsen of 1850 from himself was the external national unrest, and the group of young men, more violent perhaps in expression, but more practical at the time, as far as their ideals were concerned, than he was himself. Had Ibsen's father remained wealthy, his future might have been far different; it is the necessity for the immediate facing

[1] Tr., Payne in Jæger. Note that this poem is half poetry and half prose. See the German version.

of facts which often saves a man, during the first stages of his storm and stress period.

The play completed by Ibsen just before he went up for his examinations has never been translated into English; its romanticism is less virile than in "Catilina" and its note less personal, though its atmosphere is far more native and sincere. In September, 1850, it was presented, with slight notice taken of it, at the Christiania Theatre; and several years after was first printed as a *feuilleton* in a Bergen paper. The spirit of the piece is thoroughly of the school of Oehlenschläger; in fact, a faint echo of "Hakon Jarl" is heard in the lines of "The Warrior's Tomb." The old and seasoned dramatist of Denmark was the power directing Ibsen toward his great and interesting Saga period. In fact, "The Warrior's Tomb" in situation is a *pot-pourri* of Danish influence, a borrowing from many of Oehlenschläger's Norwegian attempts. Some critics contend that Ibsen surpasses his master in the poetic skill with which he handles the brutality and hardiness of the Viking physique, but in comparison with his own work, the spirit of this piece is not to be compared with "The Vikings at Helgeland." For its significance lies only in Ibsen's attention being drawn to Norway's past, and not in the artistic strength of its workmanship. It possesses a certain simplicity, a certain hint of the grandeur of such manhood; in Blanka, the girl, there is an ideal charm that is natural, considering Ibsen's romantic susceptibility. But the plot and motive are mediocre, as yet exhibiting small contrast of character, as yet devoid of intensive and subtle change.

The story is of the simplest.[1] A Viking, Roderik, swoops down upon a Southern warrior, spreading havoc and destruction in his path. His followers leave him behind as dead, and he is cared for by a maiden, Blanka, who converts him to Christianity. He thereupon relinquishes his piratical life, burying his shield and spear beneath a mound, which is ever kept covered with green and flowers by his foster child. But in years to come, this old man's son, swearing blood vengeance for his father's life, comes to this isle and meets Blanka; the mound before him stands witness to his father's sacrifice and his father's death. Though he loves the maid at sight, and though her Christian sweetness makes instant appeal to his sympathy, his warriors would have him visit his wrath upon her and the old man. Then Roderik reveals himself to his son, and Gandalf soon sails North with Blanka as his bride, leaving the grey-haired sire to live out his hermit's life alone.

This being the bare skeleton, wherein lies the value? If any, in the impatient tone, the discontent over the miserable generation which forgets the full stature of Norwegian men. Blanka has her ideals of the Northern Vikings, the heroes who do things, who act. Here, Ibsen contrasts the Christianity of the girl with the pagan spirit of Roderik's son, not philosophizing as he will do later in "Emperor and Galilean," but externalizing in the contrast of gentleness with hardy boldness.

The whole dramatic dialogue is an operatic sketch.

[1] I follow here the French translation, "Le Tumulus"—le Vicomte de Colleville et F. de Zepelin. See Introduction thereto; also Brandes' study of Ibsen.

Blanka's dream of the vague blue of the North is Ibsen's dream of Norway's past; Gandalf's discontent over his kingdom's lethargy since the glory of his father has departed, is Ibsen's dissatisfaction with the present time. When the son discovers what he believes to be his father's tomb, he deplores the fact that here in the South an old hero's mound finds a place. It is the Midi that has killed the North! he cries, thus echoing Oehlenschläger. The many worn-out situations have been oftentimes used in romantic pieces;[1] the father and son unknown to each other; the old man trying to save Blanka's life by claiming that upon him all vengeance must fall; the melodramatic disclosure of identity; there is little of the future Ibsen in this. Yet in the final words of the play, there is a note of prophecy, indicative of the dramatist's youthful hope:

> "The Northern glory, purified, will rise anew,
> This time victorious in spirit true."

The little that Ibsen had seen, heard, and read of the Storthing's inaction, and apparent indifference to the state of the country and the development of European matters, stung him to the quick, for early as it was, his banner was flung against compromise, and the political connection between Norway and Sweden was maintained purely in such manner. This

[1] As a matter of interest, it is well to record Gosse's statement that Blanka was played by Laura Svendsen, afterwards one of Ibsen's best interpreters, but then a débutante. On Ibsen's seventieth birthday the Berlin Press Society had the manuscript read. The date of presentation at Christiania was September 26, 1850; at Bergen, January 2, 1854.

condition next prompted him to combine his love of caricature with his incipient ability to satirize current weaknesses, in a piece modelled after Bellini's "Norma," and entitled "Norma; or, A Politician's Love." The outline of the "score" is thus given by Jæger:[1]

"Political nobilities take the place of the characters of the opera, and the most powerful blows are dealt out. In the figure of Norma, the opposition in general is derided as characterless, while at the same time several members of the Storthing are singled out by name and branded as fortune-hunters."

This production saw the light only as a contribution to the *Andhrimner*, and as that paper could boast of but a meagre circulation, Ibsen's wit and skill at verse-making had limited appeal. When finally he prepared a foreword for the book, he made a declaration as to the particular figures lampooned; in the composition, he sought to infuse some of the sprightly imagination that seemed rampant when he attended the Tribune of the Storthing, and looked down upon the perruqued heads of the members, who were debating in what seemed to him to be a futile, half-hearted fashion. But in the evening of that day, happening to go to a performance of Bellini's opera, the whole satiric panorama unfolded itself;

[1] While speaking of unpublished and unfamiliar plays of Ibsen's, note Brandes' mention of "Den Ensomne" ("The Lonely One"), dated 1886. According to Jæger, at the same time he was writing "Catilina," Ibsen was contemplating a dramatic version of the story of "Justedalrypa." Two acts were finished and then cast aside, bearing the title, "The Grouse of Justedal: a National Play in Four Acts." Alfhild in "Olaf Liljekrans" is taken from this earlier drama.

each member fell into his natural place. Holmboe, the noble father; another dignitary as the peevish old uncle who had lost all feeling for the poetry of life, and so on: thus combining his morning and evening's experiences. There is no doubt that this mood with which he regarded the government was the same which later gave impetus to the mature satires; the Storthing afforded him an opportunity of estimating the political character which was to find expression later in definite personages.[1]

This was the status of Ibsen's activity when he received his appointment at Bergen; and when he left to assume his duties, he had the gratification of realizing that even though "The Warrior's Tomb" had brought him almost nothing as far as pecuniary gain was concerned, it had at least attracted the attention of Ole Bull,[2] whose rôle, it seems, was to encourage incipient genius, and who recognised in Ibsen the same possibilities which he discovered in the talent of Edvard Grieg.

[1] See foreword, "Norma oder die Liebe eines Politikers": Musiktragödie in drei Akten (1851) and note, p. 299 and p. 636 of volume 1, "Henrik Ibsen's Sämtliche Werke in deutscher Sprache." Brandes, Elias, Schlenther.

[2] See "Life of Ole Bull," Mrs. Sara C. Bull; also see under Bull, in Halvorsen's "Norsk Forfatter-Lexikon," 1814-1880.

CHAPTER IV

BERGEN (1852-1857)

THE awakening of Norway is part of the life history of Henrik Ibsen. In his early years, when the desire to study art was uppermost in his mind, his canvases exhibited the influence of whatever small national school of painters was then in existence. As he advanced in years, his point of view became less personal; his attention concentrated on civic matters, and this change represents the difference between the sentiment of his early verses and the satiric experiment in "Norma; or, The Politician's Love."

In all directions, there was effort made to stamp the cast of Norway upon language, upon subject matter, upon culture in general, but the change was slow and the opposition strong. Even though at a later period Ibsen was overzealous in his diction, and in his criticism of the diction and style of others, so much was he influenced by Danish taste in these initial years, that his vocabulary was far from the pure Norwegian.

In respect to the theatre, the national note was weak, and the hope for a distinctively native dramatic and histrionic talent was almost *nil*, so thoroughly had the Danish system gripped the country. There had been some effort the year previous to Ibsen's birth to establish a National theatre, J. P. Strömberg, a Swede, supporting the movement. The political history of the country, while in one way quieting the restiveness of the people, in another way left them deplorably inert. This same inertia characterized the art movement in Norway.

Ibsen reached Bergen in November, 1851, the

fore, with little more than a faint idea as to what Ole Bull wanted him to do; he was told that he was to be the playwright and stage manager of a house which the musician had established the year before, and had christened the Norwegian Theatre, perhaps in the belief that the centre of dramatic art could be developed in Bergen rather than in Christiania; but more likely intent on taking some part of the strength and prestige away from Copenhagen. The salary was to be a bare pittance; to this was added a grant of four hundred specie-dollars or about £90 to enable Ibsen to travel for a few months, beginning in April, 1852,[1] the theatre being far behind in methods and deplorably lacking in actors, to say nothing of the material for the players when they were obtained.

The Bergen experience was in a way an education for Ibsen, since his reading was but meagre, and his acquaintance with drama confined to a very few authors. But during the time he held office at the theatre, he superintended the staging of one hundred and forty-five plays, a large percentage of which was by Scribe—an undeniable proof that he learned much from the external trickery of this Frenchman, evidences of which may be detected in all of his plays from "Lady Inger" to "The League of Youth."

His travelling stipend also enabled Ibsen to cast off his provincial views and to meet many of the important men of the theatre. In Christiania, he was brought in contact with the writing of Henrik Hertz, the Danish dramatist, whose delicate style had won him success in two masterpieces entitled "Svend Dyr-

[1] In this same year, 1852, a school for the training of Norwegian actors was begun.

ing's House" and "King René's Daughter." At the Theatre Royal in Copenhagen, Ibsen was introduced to Councillor Heiberg. The letter written to the management of the Norwegian Theatre at Bergen on May 16, 1852, indicates some of the work accomplished by him on this trip; besides procuring a few plays and a great deal of second-hand music, he made it a point to study the theatrical methods put into practice by other managers in actual presentations then on the boards. Here, perhaps, for the first time he was familiarized with several of Shakespeare's plays, and he witnessed some of Holberg's comedies, as well as Scribe's "Bataille de Dames." But, during his absence, he was uncomfortably pinched for money. His plans were extensive, and had he been given additional sums he might have accomplished more for his theatre by travelling systematically through the cities of Germany. But in August, 1852, he and the actors who had accompanied him to Copenhagen returned to Bergen; they had been successful to a small degree; yet the largest gain for Ibsen was personal, for the influence of Heiberg[1] and of Hertz upon this period of his writing is acknowledged. In the way of friendship, he had become acquainted with Hans Christian Andersen and the painter, J. C. Dahl.

The young stage manager now had thrust upon him additional duties; he was to be the official author of the house, preparing an original drama for Founder's Day of each year, and, furthermore, he was to

[1] Ibsen wrote a poem to Heiberg at the time of his death (1860), entitled "To the Survivors." See Gosse, p. 50, for translation.

design the costumes, sketches of which are said to exist in a large book in Bergen; a few of them have been reproduced in Rudolph Lothar's study of the dramatist. The repertoire required a considerable amount of translating, and in this part of the work Ibsen secured the good services of his future mother-in-law, Magdalene Thoresen, into whose family he appears to have had an early introduction.

In his business capacity, the young director was far from genial; in fact his overseriousness, which verged on aggressive directness, was one of the reasons for his final resignation; and, in contrast with Björnson, who afterwards assumed the post, it was much akin to ill-temper. Yet, despite the fact that the exactions and routine must have taxed his restlessness, Ibsen seems to have accomplished his work faithfully. Through the untiring labours of Mr. Archer, one is able to reach a few conclusions as to the extent of this work, by arranging a tabular list of some dramas superintended by Ibsen during his tenure of office; it is based on an article whose main object was to illustrate that while Ibsen owed little or nothing in the way of influence to George Sand or to Zola, and though he was deplorably unfamiliar with the French language, still his apprenticeship at the Bergen theatre brought him in direct contact with the constructive methods of the French dramatists of the first half of the nineteenth century.

The list is intended to do no more than to indicate a few of the most characteristic plays. Mr. Gosse is newhat extravagant when he writes: "No Bergen '851 . . . no 'Doll's House' or 'Hedda r' . . . to follow."

FRENCH INFLUENCE ON IBSEN.

Table made from William Archer's "Ibsen's Apprenticeship." *Fortnightly*, n. s. 75, January, 1904.

1851.

Four French Plays Presented.

Scribe's *La Somnambule.*
Two plays by Mélesville.
One play by Ancelot.

1852.

Eighteen French Plays Presented.

D'Ennery's *Don César.*
Scribe's *Bataille de Dames.*
L'Ambitieux.
La Tutrice.
Two plays by Bayard.
Alexandre Duval's *La Jeunesse de Henri V.*
Ponsard's *Charlotte Corday.*

1853.

Fourteen French Plays Presented.

Ibsen's *St. John's Night* (Founder's Night, Jan. 2).
Sandeau's *Mademoiselle de la Seiglière.*
Dumas's *Cathérine Howard.*
Mélesville's *Chevalier de St. George.*
Leuven's and Brunswick's *Le Mariage au Tambour.*
Bayard's and Biéville's *Si Dieu le veut.*

1854.

Fourteen French Plays Presented.

Ibsen's *Warrior's Tomb* (Founder's Night, Jan. 2).
Scribe's *Adrienne Lecouvreur.*
Les Contes de la Reine de Navarre.
Les Indépendants.
Dumas's *La Fille du Régent.*
Bayard's *Un Fils de Famille.*
Arago's and Vermond's *Mémoires du Diable.*

1855.

Twelve French Plays Presented.

[illegible] (Founder's Night, Jan. 2).
[illegible] influence of *Adrienne Lecouvreur* and [illegible] *Dames de la Reine de Navarre;* revealing [illegible] according to Archer, German mysticism and [illegible]. The grave-vault idea was a reminiscence of Dumas's *Cathérine Howard.*]
[illegible] *Le Pere au Diable.*
[illegible] Paris.

1856.

[illegible] *Feast at Solhaug* (Founder's Night, Jan. 2).
[Showing reminiscent touches of *Bataille de Dames.*]
[illegible] *La Terre d'Eau.*

1857.

[illegible] *Die Libliebenden* (Founder's Night, Jan. 2).
[illegible] and Sandeau's *Le Gendre de M. Poirier.*

Note: Statistically arranged, Mr. Archer declares that while at the Bergen Theatre, Ibsen mounted 145 plays, of which seventy-five were French, twenty-one out of that number being by Scribe.

It would be unwise to discount the importance of this repertoire upon the technical development of Ibsen; we are also told that he was, at this period, reading a small book on the technique of the drama by Hermann Hettner, who was pleading assiduously for a psychological treatment of drama, rather than the loosely constructed chronicle play. These points, taken into consideration with the facts of Ibsen's theatre-going in Christiania and Copenhagen, will [illegible] explain the superiority of "The Feast at

Solhaug" over "Olaf Liljekrans," for the latter was much earlier in point of conception, if not in actual presentation.

Another influence which one has to consider was Ibsen's interest in the national impulse toward the study of folk-lore. Jörgen Moe and Peter Christian Asbjörnsen had individually and together gathered the old popular tales and peasant traditions, re-telling them in such style as to retain to a surprising degree their original naïve flavour. Many of these stories were obtained directly from the peasants, in much the same manner as L. M. Lindeman had collected the peasant melodies. About the same time M. B. Landstad was seeking to preserve the national songs and distinctive ballads, and, furthermore, through N. M. Petersen's paraphrases of the Icelandic legends, Ibsen was gaining some knowledge of the ancient sagas.

Ibsen's enthusiasm over this nationalism was shown in his repeated analyses of the exact nature of its characteristics. As Jæger points out, "St. John's Night" was heralded by Ibsen's definition of national poetry, and "Olaf Liljekrans" followed by an earnest essay "Upon the Battle-Song and its Poetic Significance." After having defined the national writer as "one who understands how to impart to his work the fundamental tone that greets us from mountain and valley, from hillside and shore, and that, most important of all, is heard within the depths of our own being," he added some remarks to his "Catilina" concerning his historical viewpoint, for he used facts only in so far as they abetted his idea; "it is to be hoped that the author will be pardoned for havin-

given historical names to persons who, both as to character and other circumstances, appear otherwise than as history reveals them to us; and all the more because these names are hardly so conspicuous that their appearance under circumstances which history does not record should make a confusing impression." This is an opinion protecting his use of historical data in "Catilina" and forestalling his "Fru Inger of Östråt" and "Emperor and Galilean." When we come to discuss the individual plays, we shall take up the undoubted historical forces behind each one, quoting at length from his preface to "The Feast at Solhaug." Suffice it to say that his attention was now largely engaged in a contemplation of the past. To his romantic sense he had added a deep feeling for tradition.

It is hard to imagine Ibsen as a susceptible youth, and yet we have already mentioned his "Ball-room Memories," based on an infatuation of the summer of 1849, when Rikke Holst had flung a bunch of flowers in his face. Long years after, when he was nearing the end of his career, another figure of a sixteen-year-old girl was to enthral him, and maybe when the fair maid of Gossensass inspired him in the conception of the character of Hilda Wangel, there entered also into the image some memory of this earlier time. In 1856, however, Ibsen's attentions were centred elsewhere, for Dean Hans Conrad Thoresen, of the Collegiate Church of Bergen, had a daughter Susanna, "the only one," as Ibsen called her, and despite the slim condition of his purse, he was determined to marry her. In a rhymed letter addressed to her—a second ball-room poem—he feels that in

that gay, heedless throng where "the weary burden of earth" is unrealized "because of the unthinking," there is one in particular into whose spirit-tide he would like to plunge himself:

"Ah, yes! there is one, one only,
Among so many but one.
Her eyes have a secret sadness;
I read in them sorrow begun—
I read in them dreaming fancies,
That rise and sink without cease—
A heart that longs and throbs upwards,
And finds in this world no peace."

This is a characteristic failing of Ibsen's, to translate all experience in terms of the intellectual, to doubt his own emotion unless it be tested by the sad undertone of life. However, writing to Hansen in 1870, he referred to his marriage in words of true thankfulness; it was only after he had assumed this deep responsibility that serious life-interests gripped him; he spoke of his wife as having "exactly the character desiderated by a man of mind—she is illogical, but has a strong poetic instinct, a broad and liberal mind, and an almost violent antipathy to all petty considerations."

With the whole Thoresen family he was on terms, much more so than with his own; his love and regard for his mother-in-law, Magdalene Thoresen, who was herself a novelist of some considerable talent, were always of the highest and form an agreeable phase in Ibsen's career.

Jæger and Professor Gosse[1] disagree as to the

[1] Concerning these data see Dr. Julius Elias in *Die neue Rundschau*, Dec., 1906, p. 1463; also article by Brahm. In his

exact date of Ibsen's marriage; the former claims that he returned to Bergen in 1858 to get his bride; the latter fixes the date as June 26, 1856, hinting that he left the Norwegian Theatre for Christiania crippled by debt and by a wife. But that the marriage was a happy one there can be no doubt; Ibsen must have been a somewhat difficult temperament to please, yet the poem to his wife, entitled "Thanks," indicates his deep love for her. Save as an inspiration for the character of Elina in "Lady Inger of Östråt," she figures only incidentally in the finished product of her husband's work; he seldom referred to her in his letters, yet in their social life it was always her especial duty to do the many little amenities which he left undone. The Ibsen home life, however, was by no means a meagre one; nor did Ibsen remain callous to the duties of a father. In this capacity we find in him a tender regard.

From the time that Ibsen left Bergen in the summer of 1857, until the publication of "Brand," he was destined to undergo the ordeals of unremitting struggle; the royalties gleaned from his plays were insignificant, the salary given him at the Norwegian Theatre in Christiania insufficient, and debts were piling up and were paid in part through the untiring devotion of friends. Those who did not actually give him pecuniary aid were nearly all solicitous about his receiving grants. Such was the dire condition at times that he could not put the necessary postage on his correspondence. But when Ibsen left

petition to the Norwegian Government (Correspondence, Letter 13), March 10, 1863, Ibsen plainly states that he was married in 1858.

Bergen, he had done some work which showed signs of ability, though not of any very marked originality. He had gained a store of useful experience, his attention had been turned upon that source which was to prompt his first distinctive period—that of the saga—as a dramatist. The plays he had presented on Founder's Day each year had created no noticeable comment, but his mind was actively engaged in the working out of suggestions which were finally to become "The Vikings at Helgeland" and "The Pretenders."

For the sake of agreement with Mr. Archer's edition, our discussion of the plays must, in the beginning, be slightly changed about. "St. John's Night" was given to the public in 1853; "Lady Inger of Östråt" in 1855; "The Feast at Solhaug" in 1856, and "Olaf Liljekrans" in 1857; but since the first and the last have never been printed in English, being disregarded by Mr. Archer as of inferior interest, it is well to consider them briefly in passing. Ibsen himself was averse to having them included in any definitive edition.

Again, the student has to acknowledge indebtedness to Jæger for a sketch of "St. John's Night," a piece of fairy lore akin to "A Midsummer Night's Dream," a mixture of elfin fancy in the midst of every-day surroundings. The plot runs as follows:[1]

"The scene is laid upon a farm in Thelemarken, where ladies and students have assembled on St. John's Eve. A betrothal is about to be pronounced, and in celebration of the occasion, punch is brought

[1] This synopsis of Jæger's is based on an account given in Blanc's history of the Bergen Theatre.

into the garden. Here the nixies come in and express the juice of a mysterious plant into the punch bowl. Whoever drinks of this juice is no longer dazzled by outward appearances; the scales drop from his eyes, and he beholds 'the inner life, that sits in the secret recesses of the soul.' . . . After the couples in the piece have partaken of the punch, they stroll out to the St. John's hill, where the mountain opens for those whose sight has been made clear, so that they see the mountain king surrounded by dancing elves and hillfolk. The prosaic natures, on the other hand, see only girls and boys dancing about a St. John's fire, and take the mountain king for a member of the festival committee. A romantic poet is one of these common-place people. A play of elective affinities now takes place, under the influence of the magic draught of the nixies; the poetically inclined natures now understand each other, and are brought together in spite of the betrothal that had separated them before, while those of prosaic disposition also join forces. At the same time, an ancient wrong that had been done the romantic lover is discovered and righted, and all is brought to a satisfactory ending."

Such artificiality of situation and sentiment is further seen in "Olaf Liljekrans." The legend from which Ibsen took suggestions for his plot is contained in Landstad's "Norwegian Folk-Songs" and is characterized by certain supernatural qualities resorted to in "St. John's Night"; but he likewise drew upon the tale of "Justedalrypa." The piece was never a success, and a few years after, prompted by a desire which he had always manifested to write the

libretto for an opera, he proceeded to revise "Olaf" for this purpose, even sending part of the manuscript to the composer, Udbye, but the idea was for some reason abandoned.

The play marks a certain change in Ibsen's viewpoint; it is the last of his work to be purely romantic in tone, and it is a transition from the ballad to the saga style. His romantic period did not wholly succeed in making him lose his interest in the life around him; even his fancy was connected, however unorganically, with the types of people he saw; and, in "Olaf Liljekrans," his attention became more concentrated upon his *dramatis personæ*, although the developing of the plot was wholly inconsequent and without any particular motive prompting it.

When the manuscript was completed, it was sent to the Christiania Theatre, but was immediately declined by the artistic director. Ibsen's relations with this Borgaard were not cordial; the two differed on many essential points, one being that the latter wished certain changes made in "Lady Inger" which Ibsen refused to make; this aggressive attitude on his part may have caused Borgaard's later refusal of "The Vikings." Considering the ferment in Ibsen's mind as to the national qualities in art, and realizing how persistently he was reading the eddas, the sagas, and the ballads, it is strange, as Brandes asserts, that the diction of this piece should be so thoroughly Danish; an examination of the text will emphasize the absence of distinctively Norwegian words. As yet Ibsen was still a student of the drama; he was neither independent in style nor spontaneous in imagination; he was experimenting with what he had

learned from Oehlenschläger, Holberg, and Hertz. After all, it is marked how prone he was to imitation; he never himself made an original break, but only deepened, and perfected the experiments of others—a species of dramatic Edison. We shall find him working upon a form of expression that would suit the drama yet contain the ballad swing; this was not pioneer effort on his part, but a continuation of what Hertz himself had attempted; we shall find him following the example of Björnson's "Bankruptcy" and "The Editor" and surpassing them both in point of style and vitality. "Olaf Liljekrans" in this respect was anything but noteworthy; its significance is neither personal nor artistic.

As for the mere story, it is trite in the telling. Olaf Liljekrans[1] is betrothed to Ingeborg Guldvik; the marriage is to be one of convenience, since the estate of Dame Kirsten Liljekrans is in sore need of financial backing, which the peasant, Arne Fra Guldvik, might give it, while the latter is intent on an alliance with a family whose social position he covets. But the two parents have not reckoned with their children. On the day set aside for the final meeting, Olaf is nowhere to be found; he has hied him to the mountain valley and has become passionately enamoured of Alfhild, daughter of an old musician, Thorgjerd, while Ingeborg Guldvik in her turn is casting longing looks upon another man, Hemming, her mother's equerry.

Olaf is a weak individual; he has no sense of responsibility; Ingeborg passes from his mind as easily

[1] See the French translation of "Olaf" by Vicomte de Colleville and F. de Zepelin.

as Alfhild, when she is later on persuaded to go with him from her mountain isolation to his own village, where, no sooner arrived, than he realizes the awkward situation and succumbs to his mother's pleading. The course of events is now haphazard; Alfhild, a wild being, somewhat similar to Gerd in "Brand," sets fire to the house in which Ingeborg is to become the wife of Olaf, and flees to the mountains, pursued by Fru Kirsten's people. To add to the consternation, at the same moment that Alfhild throws the lighted torch, Hemming and Ingeborg depart; but their love is of the kind that Ibsen later is to cartoon in "Love's Comedy." Olaf returns to the mountain valley; there he comes upon Alfhild, who naturally doubts his avowals, having been once deceived; then he meets with Ingeborg and Hemming and they all reach some understanding. When, finally, Fru Kirsten and Arne Fra Guldvik capture Alfhild, it is likely to go hard with the elf-like creature, for she is accused of witchery which they believe she has practised upon Olaf, who for a second time has disappeared. The girl hears her crimes narrated; what she has done is no more than what has been done to her; she boldly faces the cross-examination and listens calmly to the sentence passed upon her of instant death, since she refuses to tell of Olaf's abiding place. But just at the moment when she is to be sacrificed, Fru Kirsten offers her one more opportunity, not knowing that near by and witness to this scene is Olaf himself. Every condemned person has the right to be championed, and if among those around her there is one who is willing to uphold her innocence and to marry her, then she may go free.

Olaf claims this right. In the end, the pairing off is quickly done. Arne blesses his daughter, and Fru Kirsten, still intent on worldly gain, hearing of the rich lands which, as events disclose, belong to Alfhild, is reconciled, and, in operatic style, the drama is brought to a close.

Throughout the text, song and folk-lore are interspersed, and the lines are efflorescent and sentimental. There is a certain abandon in the narrative which portends "Peer Gynt," although the scenic background is hardly as vital. The dramatic impulse is not as dominant as the lyric, nor are the characters marked by any interests which would appeal to the sympathies of modern readers.

Barring this one play, Ibsen's saga period exhibits marked advance from piece to piece. The works so far considered have been fragmentary and largely significant only as they indicated the elements which later would affect his craftsmanship and his critical attitude toward life. Even in its fragmentary bearing, Ibsen's advance, however slow, has been thoroughly consistent, though at times somewhat indistinct. But from now on, the appearance of each new play represented a positive value, had a distinct history of its evolution; and furthermore, what is of decided importance to English readers, is available in faithful translation. In a certain sense, the first two plays in the saga period of Ibsen's career might be regarded as part of his apprenticeship days; but they contain so many excellencies that they justify our considering the experimental stage as over. Henrik Ibsen was now beginning to realize his mission both as a poet and as a playwright.

CHAPTER V

"FRU INGER OF ÖSTRÄT" AND "THE FEAST AT SOLHAUG."

THE important question regarding the use of ballad and saga material in drama involved the difficulty of adapting the material to drama, in view of its formal metre. In the beginning, interested as he was in the whole body of this particular class of literature, Ibsen did not trouble himself about the philosophy of style, which, however, was soon to impress itself upon him. He imbibed, as it were, the method of Henrik Hertz, whose "Svend Dyring's House" had dealt with Danish folk song in an original verse that seemed to overleap the difficulties of narrative; and thereto he added many of the artifices which marked Scribe's so-called "well-made" play.

In 1883, when he came to write a preface for the second edition of "The Feast at Solhaug," Ibsen was loath to acknowledge this literary indebtedness, refuting George Brandes' statement that the piece was fashioned under Hertz's influence; in fact, he asserted that he was not particularly impressed with Hertz as a dramatist. Ibsen was, however, always oversure as to his own interpretation of himself, and I venture to agree with Mr. Archer's belief that to Hertz belongs the original impulse which started this saga period.[1]

But thus far we may rely upon Ibsen's statement, that in his development a definite progressiveness is

[1] Ibsen has expressed his wish that those who would see him well represented should consult Valfrid Vasenius's "Henrik Ibsen's Dramatic Poetry in its First Stage" (1879); as well as "Henrik Ibsen: The Portrait of a Skald" (1882).

to be detected. During 1854 he became somewhat familiar with the literature and history of his own country in the Middle Ages. "Lady Inger of Östråt" points to an easy familiarity with the mediæval manners as well as with the political temper of that era. Not finding the period so very pregnant with dramatic opportunities, however, he turned, with half-hearted interest, to the sagas of the kings and to traditional as well as legendary incident, which he also found difficult to use at the moment.

Happening upon the Icelandic "family" sagas, he instantly recognised more of the human atmosphere which drama required, more of the personal character which afforded an outlet for individual passion. And so he studied carefully and to good purpose the Petersen translations—while gradually there was shaped in his mind the whole skeleton of "The Vikings at Helgeland." The cross-purposes between his two women heroines, the banquet scenes, the quarrels were all ready to hand. "In short," so he confesses, "it was my intention to reproduce dramatically exactly what the Saga of the Volsungs gives in epic form."

Other inclinations were to intervene, for Landstad's ballads were also claiming Ibsen's attention, and the romanticism which was still strong within him would not allow him to pass such data by. "My mood of the moment," he said, "was more in harmony with the literary romanticism of the Middle Ages than with the deeds of the sagas, with poetical than with prose compositions, with the word-melody of the ballad than with the characterization of the saga." That is why "The Feast at Solhaug" usurped his

attention and was completed before "The Vikings at Helgeland." In every essential it is the immature placing of saga figures within a lighter, lyrical setting of the ballad spirit.

The year following the completion of "The Feast at Solhaug" he wrote his essay, "Upon the Battle-song and its Poetic Significance," which was sent to his friend, Botten-Hansen, who was then editing the newspaper *Illustreret Nyhedsblad*. It is to be remembered that here was a dramatic author who was scouring the popular remains of his national literature for material containing dynamic power. He was not satisfied with the form at his command—a form which required the commingling of the lyric with the ballad and with drama style. These elements dominate the finished play of "The Feast at Solhaug" and constitute the chief reasons for its artistic weakness.

Moreover, Ibsen's zealous desire to reproduce the spirit of a past age kept him at first from conceiving clearly the main motives of his characters; but he chafed beneath his own imitation and kept working until the surety of his technique made him bold to be freer in his use of materials. His essay[1] very clearly indicates his mental attitude toward his new data, and, for an understanding of the artist at the time, the significance of his arguments needs to be thoroughly grasped.

[1] This essay is contained in the first volume of Henrik Ibsen's Sämtliche Werke; ed. George Brandes, Julius Elias, Paul Schlenther, p. 337; translated by Ethel H. Hearn under title, "The Saga and the Ballad," *Contemporary Review*, 90:318-31, September, 1906.

He writes:

"The real people, who in Norway, as in other places, have stood apart from all direct influence of the poetry of art, have found in their ballad poesy a satisfying expression for their inner life, which has here found a form whereby to reveal its intellectual contents to all and everyone. The ballad is not written by a single individual; it is the sum total of the poetic strength of a whole people; it is the fruit of its poetic endowment."

Ibsen therefore believes that the objectivity which characterizes the ballad has kept people aloof from national literature in poetry. It is his belief that poetical subjectivity has no meaning to the people, and unlike in every way are those very people to the theatregoers who only seek a *new situation or a new intrigue.*

"This need for poetic self-activity," he continues, "is a characteristic of the whole Teutonic race, and hence it is that only certain forms of art are truly demotic in this race, while the other forms have through civilization become the property of the cultured alone, and are still to this day dead and foreign to the mass of the people."

Thus, in the south of Europe, Ibsen calls attention to the fact that with the Greeks and Romans and with the Romance peoples in general there was no bulk of folk-poetry to compare with the Norwegian ballads. This passive relation to their art accounts for the importance placed upon plastics in the form of art which calls for contemplation than for activity of mind. Therefore, with [illegible] of pride in the contrast, Ibsen writes:

"He [the Northerner] asks for the outlines only of the drawing, to which he will himself put in the last touches, all according to his own requirements; he does not, like the Southerner, want the artist to point to his work and show him where the centre lies —he will find the centre for himself, and that, not in any prescribed way, but through that radius which the individual shading of the folk character indicates to him as the nearest."

A strong sense of possession lies in ballad history; it is an important part of popular life. Flourishing in a free atmosphere, when once confined, it droops and dies. Fresh from his investigations, Ibsen is thankful, however, for the husk. And though it has declined, the ballad, *per se*, has given rise to another form.

"The time will come," he declares, "when national art poetry will go to ballad poetry as to an inexhaustible mine. Cleansed, led back to its original purity and raised throughout, it will again strike root among the people. The beginning has already been made in the case of the sagas; Oehlenschläger's genius guessed at the necessity of a national basis for the national poetry. . . . That Oehlenschläger threw himself on the saga, and not on to the ballad, was a natural consequence of the state of things at the time of his first appearance."

The reason for this was that research had been long engaged on the sagas, and only through Oehlenschläger's individual work with the ballad form could a way be prepared for a thorough appreciation of the value of the ballad. While Oehlenschläger drew material from the ballad, Ibsen sees in him a peculia

ignoring of "the difference in treatment required by the ballad and by the saga." Probably he recognised that the content of the ballad was better suited to drama than the saga, which "is a great, cold, isolated epos, in its inmost essence objective and ignorant of everything lyric." For, to Ibsen:

"The drama, as we know, is a high connecting link between the lyric and the epic. . . . By means of dramatic treatment the saga period does indeed enter into closer relations with reality; but this is just what it should not do; the statue gains nothing by being given the natural colour of skin, hair, and eyes."

Herein lies the fault Ibsen finds in Oehlenschläger, for he might just as well have told "Hakon Jarl"[1] in prose as in five-footed iambics, which are foreign to the national metre. He writes further:

"The saga is, as I have already remarked, entirely epic; in the ballad, on the contrary, the lyrical is present, not in the same proportion, indeed, as in the drama, but still present—and the dramatic writer who goes to the ballads for his material need not subject their matter to so much alteration as he who takes it from the sagas."

Hence, the ballad, affording a freer form, gives the dramatic writer more opportunity to embody feeling and atmosphere in his work, while the metres suggest larger liberties in dialogue form. He continues:

"Therefore this poetic source will probably be

[1] An English version of Oehlenschläger's "Hakon Jarl," James Christian Lindberg. University Studies. Vol. V., No. 1, Jan., 1905. University of Nebraska.

diligently used by future writers who will build on the foundations laid by Oehlenschläger. . . . The national art poetry of the North began with the saga, it is now the turn of the ballad; Oehlenschläger's treatment of the saga corresponds to the variations of a musical genius on a popular theme; the dramatic treatment of the ballad may be the popular melody itself, artistically treated and artistically executed."

In comparison with all sagas which are pagan, Ibsen thus calls attention to the ballad form as distinctively Christian:

"It does indeed contain a heathen element, but this is present in a quite different and higher phase than in the mythical sagas, and it is in this that the poetical offspring of Christendom, the Romance, manifests its influence on ballad poetry."

In other words, according to Ibsen, the ballad contains something of the miraculous, which the saga will not admit. The ballad echoes Shakespeare's "There are more things in heaven and earth than this world dreams of." We find, therefore, the ballad linking closer the folks of all lands; in Scandinavia, in Germany, in France, the material is confined within a "closely-allied range of ideas." On the whole, Ibsen's minute analysis defends the position and rich worth of this form of poetry.

Such may be said to have been the final outcome of his practical working with the ballad form, and his return to the saga material. Both "Lady Inger of Östråt" and "The Feast at Solhaug" contain the two elements and they both were written when the personal note in the man was thoroughly attuned to romance; the feeling in the treatment, therefore

dominates over any attempt to create large character, yet the plays are distinctive, in especial the first, of a mannerism which Ibsen never fully shook off until the rebellious Nora declared her independence—a mannerism marked by theatrical subterfuges of misunderstandings and similar artificialities.

"Lady Inger of Östrât" was written for the anniversary of the foundation of the Bergen Theatre, and was played there on January 2, 1855; two years after, it appeared in five numbers of Botten-Hansen's paper, and then was issued in book form, not being sufficiently popular to warrant a second edition until December, 1874, when, as was Ibsen's usual custom, the manuscript was subjected to a thorough revision.[1] In the letter of 1870, to Hansen, Ibsen frankly lays the inspiration of this piece to the love affair with Rikke Holst, which, however much of a mild flirtation, was hastily stopped when the father of the girl discovered secret wanderings of the two around Bergen. The mood of the moment inspired his poems "Field Flowers" and "A Bird Song," but the figure of the girl herself entered into the invention of Elina Gyldenlöve. Whether this be so or not is of small consequence; reasons of this sort are of the most illusive kind.

Ibsen's manipulation of the Catiline theme had afforded him experience in the handling of historical materials, and the liberties he took in that piece were likewise perpetrated in his use of Norwegian history. The exact period selected was the one which would

[1] According to Halvorsen, the third edition was printed in 1894. Two German translations are noted: the one by Emma Klingenfeld (1877), the other by M. von Borch (1891).

show Norwegian nobility and peasantry at the lowest ebb of national consciousness. It was the time of the Reformation; and the impress of Luther's teachings, while it had been felt in Sweden and Denmark, had passed over the rest of Scandinavia without so much as disquieting the grip of Catholicism. Therefore, Ibsen showed his customary irritation when he insistently sounded this national poverty. Moreover, his choice of the reign of Duke Frederick of Holstein, known as Frederick I. (1524-33), presented to hand the character of Fru Inger of Östråt, as well as her daughters, who were married to Danish nobles and to Swedish pretenders, in order to satisfy the unquenchable ambition of their mother.

The discrepancies between Ibsen and history[1] are many, but in no way do they detract from the drama, however much they may distort truth. Ibsen has endowed Fru Inger with a patriotic zeal which she never actually possessed, and with a large amount of human warmth in which she was really lacking. He has painted the lover, Nils Lykke, in idealistic colours, ignoring the crime committed by him upon Lucia, which in reality was incest and which brought him in consequence to the dungeon. History mentions a son of Sten Sture—or at least a peasant who claimed to be the son—but it was a pure invention on Ibsen's

[1] For historical data the reader is referred to R. Nisbet Bain's "Scandinavia" in the *Cambridge Historical Series*, University Press, 1905; Chapter III., "Gustavus Vasa of Sweden, 1523-1560, and the War of Liberation," p. 44 *seq.*; Chapter V., "The Reformation in Scandinavia, 1520-1560," p. 99, *seq.* See also H. H. Boyesen's "The Story of Norway." (*Story of the Nations Series*), Putnam, 1886; and Jæger's biography.

ırt to make him an illegitimate child of Fru Inger. his Swedish impostor, according to Boyesen, was etrothed to Fru Inger's fourth daughter.

The use that Ibsen made of these facts was perfectly legitimate, provided it was not his intention to aim at an exact historical portraiture. A dramatist has the right to shape his material to particular dramatic needs, and Ibsen appears literally to have built his scenes on the principles which he had learned from plays forming the Bergen repertoire.

The piece presents many excellent qualities; it reveals Ibsen's theatrical powers, which were strong, even at this initial point; it shows a conflict of motives which is handled with some skill; it emphasizes that the central figure, in her vocation, was typifying the young dramatist's belief in everyone's vocation being God-sent. For a young man to be able to create an undoubted tragic tone and in such a dignified fashion is no mean accomplishment.

This drama of intrigue is in its main handling most conventional, and in the jugglery between the use of historical detail and theatric effect, Ibsen has fallen into confusing situations which are not sufficiently explained and therefore are misleading. This was the effect produced upon the Bergen audiences in 1855, as well as upon the London audiences when the play was performed by the Stage Society on January 28, 1906. The discrepancies are instantly detected when one comes to analyze the plot.[1]

[1] According to Halvorsen, the following performances of "Fru Inger of Östråt" are of interest: Trondhjem, 1857; Christiania, 1859, 1875; Stockholm, 1877; Copenhagen, 1895 Berlin, 1878, 1888.

Norway being in a state of torpor, her nobles exiled, and even Fru Inger lukewarm in her attitude toward Denmark, the play from the beginning is based upon distrust and gloom. While in history, Lady Inger has naught to fear from Denmark, and her sympathies are not torn between her people and the rulers in power, Ibsen, nevertheless, strives to sound the trumpet of nationalism. The daughter, Elina, eyes her mother askance because of her inaction; the retainers would arm themselves and would hasten to assist the uprising peasants in Sweden, yet they are stopped by their mistress, who has upon her conscience the dread of discovery of an illegitimate child by a former Swedish king, and, in consequence, dare not move against that country.

At Östråt, there arrives a stranger, Olaf Skaktavl, an outlawed Norwegian noble, but why he comes or why Nils Lykke, the Danish knight, follows soon after is not sufficiently explained. We are made to realize that Lady Inger is a figure of large proportions; into whichever balance of the Scandinavian scale she might throw her power it would be of consequence to the fortunate side. As she has advanced in years, her ambition has been put above all things else, an ambition which, through misunderstanding, was finally, in the Ibsen play, to result in the undoing of all her children. One feels by the manner of the dramatist's treatment the national inertia of the moment, and the importance of Fru Inger's move when she makes it.

Skaktavl has come to Östråt, mayhap, to gain this powerful woman's support; in Sweden the Dales are ready to rise against the nobles, Peter the Chan-

cellor is leaning toward them in sympathy, and Skaktavl is himself waiting for a stranger who is to meet him at Östråt. Now Lady Inger is expecting Nils Lykke, and she has a high and varied game to play. She is hedged all around with motives; she would keep a way open with Denmark; she would hold the favour of Norway; she would avenge the shame of Lucia, her dead daughter, by inveigling Nils Lykke into the love charms of her other daughter, Elina, and thus punish the knight for his wrong-doing—she would accomplish this, the secret knowledge of her and Sture's illegitimate son all the while gnawing in her breast.

This complication is purely the dramatist's scheme; there are no significant reasons given why Skaktavl's stranger guest should meet him at Östråt, but, on the other hand, it is natural that since the meeting is thus arranged, Nils Lykke should be mistaken for the man. And so the latter arrives with a Swedish troop at his back; he would fain play the game with Fru Inger alone, since the more would be his glory in the eyes of his king if without assistance he gained advantage over her. In truth, he and his soldiers are after Nils Sture, the real son of Sweden's king, he who might be monarch, if the popular uprisings willed it. Perhaps this stranger on the way to Östråt is the very man they are after. Nils Lykke doubts Fru Inger's motives and he has cause to fear her duplicity, since he brought Lucia to a shameful grave.

Between the woman and her Danish guest, therefore, the action is a game with keen-edged tools, and much is taken from the strength of Fru Inger, the

shrewdness and poignancy which history bestows upon her, in contrast with the skill and irresistible attractiveness of Nils Lykke. Elina only betrays the feminine human when her heart goes out to him. Even after her mother, seeing the odds turning against her, reveals to Elina that this lover of the one child is the seducer of the other, she still persists in her romantic infatuation for the man.

What Nils Lykke has schemed is this: he would create a new King of Sweden, whose throne is given him through Denmark's assistance; he would do this and more. Yet his real intention is to trap Fru Inger into betraying the hiding place of Nils Sture, so that the troops with him, which are Swedish troops, may snap up the heir, and the pride and position of Inger Gyldenlöve may thus be lowered to the dust in the eyes of Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

Now, Skaktavl and Lykke being brought together in mistaken manner, the latter is quicker to grasp the situation than the former; he learns that Peter Kanzler has appointed the meeting with the stranger, and has confided to his secret emissary papers for Skaktavl which should be delivered to Skaktavl at any moment. But in quick fashion, passing himself off as this messenger, Lykke postpones the time for delivering the papers, knowing that soon the real stranger will appear with the documents of import, which he can secure by another subterfuge.

Elina enters Nils Lykke's heart as quickly as he conquers hers; nor can we help admiring the pleading of his cause. The girl is one of Ibsen's sweetest characterizations; she succeeds in drawing the noblest qualities out of the man; she makes him feel the de-

grading weight of his past deeds. "Had I met a woman proud and noble and high-souled, even as you," he said, "then had my path been different. . . . For this I believe: a woman is the mightiest power in the world, and in her hand it lies to guide a man whither God Almighty would have him go." They are both completely under the spell, and though they both are constrained in their speech, Nils Lykke is too old a hand at love-making not to comprehend the meaning of her question, "Can I look towards Denmark from this hall?"

No sooner is Lykke left alone than the stranger arrives, Nils Stensson, the messenger from Peter Kanzler, bearing the despatch. Another misconception ensues, Lykke being taken for Skaktavl by the boy. So it is that the Danish knight obtains easy possession of great and important news: firstly, that the stranger before him is not Nils Sture; secondly, that the heir to Sweden's throne is dead; thirdly, that Nils Stensson, so like the noble line, has been mistaken by people along the way for the dead Count; and fourthly, through the notes and papers, that Inger Gyldenlöve has a son who has been held in hostage by Peter Kanzler, who is fearful of her treachery and of her insatiable ambition.

The aspect of the intrigue changes. Nils Lykke, quick to reach inferences, makes bold to tell the boy that he is in truth Sten Sture's son, though he is at first in ignorance of the identity of his real mother. He learns soon after, under pledge of secrecy, that she is Fru Inger of Östråt. From this point the play progresses with considerable action, the whole denouement being dependent entirely upon misunder-

standings. No sooner does Fru Inger discover that her hidden sin is known, no sooner does she, taken unawares, confess all to both men, than snares and treachery develop thick and fast. The woman's character is shown torn between two loves—that of a mother and that of a patriot; she has been willing to sacrifice all her children to her ambition; now she is anxious to sacrifice still more in order to have her son with her.

The surest way for Fru Inger to accomplish this end is for her to aid in placing her son's half-brother on the Swedish throne, unless— Here it dawns upon her that maybe she might elevate her own child to the kingship and herself be mother to a king. Nils Lykke's wiles are now full grown; they work despite in the end he would stop events onrushing to destruction. And this end is simply that, believing the stranger to be Count Sture, and there having grown in her heart the consuming ambition to crown her son, Fru Inger has Nils Stensson killed, not knowing until too late that she has been the murderer of her child. To add to the tragedy, her supposed vengeance upon Nils Lykke results in a heavier blow falling upon her daughter, whose whole being has gone out to this undoubted knight of chivalry—a true wooer in the romantic style.

The weakness of Fru Inger's character is due to the flaws in Ibsen's constructive abilities; a woman as easily duped as she could never have remained so long a political power in her country, at the same time courted and distrusted on all sides because of her determination not to declare her faith with any faction. Her tragic brooding, in contrast with

pure tenderness of Elina, is Ibsen's first thoroughly realistic balancing of the dark woman beside the touching figure of feminine trust. In his Saga period, the dramatist has not surpassed the beauty of Elina's character though he has excelled Fru Inger. This may be because later his technique was to be more coherent; and he was then less likely, when seeking to make a character stand out in undoubted greatness, to obscure it by having all vital motives, all romantic interest centred against her.

Those anxious to stamp Ibsen with a phrase have called "Lady Inger of Östråt" the "Tragedy of the Candelabra," because the scenes all occur in the dim light of the evening. It is a tragedy of ambition, the same as "Macbeth," inasmuch as the heroine of each is a woman of consuming and dark designs. Ibsen's manner of depicting Fru Inger was his manner of drawing Catiline—idealizing history in many essentials, and, in the process, adding, as his own particular contribution, an inchoate mass of involved intrigues. This is sufficient to make it difficult to follow the story consistently in the course of spoken dialogue; otherwise, the play, both in atmosphere and in point of curiosity, possesses considerable stage appeal.

Ibsen's own interest in the piece was marked by his desire to revise it in 1873. He did not always feel this way toward his work, for, in 1870, he wrote to Botten-Hansen, disowning "The Feast at Solhaug," and indicating that he would fain forget it, except that it had some personal value. What this value might have been other than that between the performance of "Lady Inger" and the completion of "The

Feast at Solhaug," he had come to know Susanna Dåe Thoresen, and that a few days after the performance of the play, he had gained entrance into the Thoresen household at Bergen, is not stated.

An unexpected success greeted Ibsen when this latter piece was presented at the theatre on Founder's Night in 1856.[1] Being stage manager, he was enabled to cast and rehearse the drama himself, and not only was he called before the curtain, but he was likewise serenaded afterwards by the orchestra. "I almost think that I went so far as to make some kind of speech from my window," he wrote; "certain I am that I felt extremely happy."

The play was soon on the boards in Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Christiania; in the Norwegian capital, it met with severe handling, the cause being surveyed by Ibsen in his 1883 preface to the second edition. It had been kindly received by the audience, and Björnson, in an overflow of friendly feeling, had noticed it in the *Morgenblad;* but the "real" critics scored it mercilessly. This Ibsen considered was due to the second-hand professional training which most

[1] The play was given at the Christiania Theatre, March 13, 1856, and then published by Tönsberg. Björnson's "Cripple Hulda" deals with a similar situation. See Jæger's Biography, p. 104; also see Vasenius. Halvorsen's record runs: For the Bergen Theatre production, music was written by F. G. Schediwy; for the Christiania performance, music by Paolo Sperati and in 1897 by Lange-Müller. Other dates are: Stockholm (1857); Copenhagen (1861, music by Glæser); Copenhagen (1886); Vienna (1891); Munich (1897). German translations of the play have been made by Emma Klingenfeld (1888) and Christian Morgenstern (1898). A Norwegian parody of the play was made in 1876.

of them had—young men who extracted ideas from Heiberg's essay "On the Vaudeville," and from the dramatic controversy between Heiberg, Oehlenschläger and the poet Hauch. These so-called critics had certain artificial canons of taste; one of which seemed to be that they must foam at the mouth whenever a new author came to the fore. They were not thinkers, they were not original, "their very frame of mind was borrowed."

Thus, Ibsen says, they were only too eager to draw a likeness between "The Feast at Solhaug" and Hertz's "Svend Dyring's House," a comparison which the author resented. At this time Ibsen held the opinion that dramatic literature was original, no matter where one procured the material for the plot or story, provided the personality was indelibly stamped upon it. At the age of fifty-five he wrote, with naïve frankness: "A light summer breeze plays over the rhythm of my verse; over that of Hertz's brood the storms of autumn."

The piece could with ease be discarded from the body of Ibsen's work, for its construction is feeble, or, at least, is French. As Mr. Archer has said: "It may indeed be called Scribe's *Bataille de Dames* writ tragic." The intermingling of the lyric with the melodramatic, of the human with the ballad story, is inartistic; in addition to which the English reader has a translation which contains no feeling for verse perfection or for the choice of words. Nevertheless, the mere dramatic outline contains a certain power of contrast in the two sisters, Margit and Signë, later to be developed in "The Vikings at Helgeland." Perhaps the critical differences concerning the piece

lay in the decision as to whether or not Hertz could handle the metre of the Danish battle-song more skilfully than Ibsen. Had the reviewers objected openly to the clap-trap stock incidents, typified by the cup of poison, they would have been only too correct in their estimate; but their spleen was personal and vicious.

We must, therefore, take "The Feast at Solhaug" as a transition sketch which carries Ibsen from his pure romantic period into the saga; here he was also experimenting, however slightly, with prose; here the Viking spirit was contending with the narrative of the ballad.

Margit is married to Bengt, the rich master of Solhaug; she has gained wealth, but not the happiness of love. In the midst of her oppressive existence there moves the graceful figure of her sister Signë, whose hand is being sought by Knut Gesling, the king's sheriff; his vows that he will marry her are more to him in their fulfilling than his manners are gentle in the fulfilment. But the two women are both of them somehow held in thrall by the memory of Gudmund Alfson, who left them years before, when Margit was free to love him, and when Signë was naught but a slip of a girl.

Now three years had Margit been wed to Bengt, and beneath his caresses, the wife endures the tortures of this memory. The vista of years with such a husband stretches out in unending misery, while Gudmund's songs keep sounding in her ears.

This is her frame of mind when Signë, now grown into womanhood, tells her of the return of their kinsman, Gudmund, whose harp has been Signë's c

through the years of his absence. They all rejoice over their guest's arrival, even Margit, who decks herself in scarlet and vair, while within her breast is locked the tragedy told in the song of the Hill-king and his maiden bride.

Then follows the parrying of blows between Gudmund and Margit, her whose pride would keep hidden her overwhelming feeling, him whose warrior's eye has caught the glint of Signë's glance. Thus we have the Ibsen equation—this time a man between two women, both contending for his love. Margit's husband is blind to all but his own power as a spouse; some find in him a foreshadowing of the simple Tesman in "Hedda Gabler."

Instead of Gudmund's returning to Solhaug in honour, he is in truth outlawed, not only in love, since Margit is now a dame, but in worldly ways, since, having journeyed to France with the Chancellor to gain a fair princess for his king, on the return, the Chancellor and princess had fallen in love, and rather than she should be mated to the king, the two plotted to take his life. Being discovered, they planned to shift the treachery to Alfson's shoulders, but he fled from the court before the fatal hour of his banishment arrived.

Gudmund shows Margit the very phial which was to have ended the king's life, and there creeps into her brain the idea that maybe this same poison might rid her of Bengt, when she would be free herself to win her only love! And soon the kinsman of these two sisters sings to them, and in the hearts of both grows the passion of love—to one a matured feeling, to the other a realization of innocent dreams.

Once more does Ibsen excel in his lyric love-passages. To Gudmund there dawns the full truth about these sisters; he realizes the wide contrast in the pride of Margit, whom he had once loved so deeply, and the sweet nature of Signë, now no longer a child.

When the time arrives to declare openly his position, Margit misunderstands, thinking that Gudmund longs for her. It is the misunderstanding characteristic of the French plays, which Browning uses more skilfully in his dramatic sketch, "In a Balcony," and which here involves the sisters as well as Gudmund and Knut in a double complication; for the latter, when he discovers the identity of this guest at Solhaug, agrees to forget that Margit's kinsman is an outlaw, in the belief that Gudmund will be of service to him in his suit for Signë's hand.

Thus the story develops through legend and song, so selected by Ibsen as to harmonize with the brooding of Margit's soul. She begs the poison from Gudmund, pretending to throw it away, yet slipping it deftly into the folds of her gown. But when the misunderstandings are cleared, when both she and Knut Gesling realize that Gudmund and Signë have vowed their love to each other, then the evil plotting begins. Knut flings defiance in the outlaw's face, while Margit determines that the phial's contents must break the chains which bind her to a detested husband, before it is too late.

The poisoned cup of mead which she prepares never reaches Bengt, however; he is about to drink of it when he hears the rapid approach of Knut Gesling with his armed men. Then Signë and Gudmund enter the room, planning their flight, and are abo[illegible]

to drink from the vessel, when the latter discovers that the liquid in its red glow is like the draught he took from Margit's hand when he went away, in fact the very beaker, and he is kept from drinking thereof because of the memory aroused. Whereupon Margit returning to the room is fearful lest she has caused their doom, and by her grief does Gudmund come to understand the evil which circumstance has thus averted.

In the fray which follows, Margit's husband is slain, but too late for her to claim her heart's desire; as for the outlaw, he soon finds his enemy, Knut, in chains; and, furthermore, a messenger brings him news that the king no longer holds him responsible for the tragedy of the princess. Margit turns toward the cloister in customary romantic fashion, while Gudmund and Signë, left together, turn to greet the morning of their love. Ibsen always expresses this sentiment of true living by the rising of the sun, the flooding of the stage with light, indicative of the heart's fulness.

There is nothing particularly striking in this story, unless we take it in connection with "The Vikings at Helgeland." It represents certain characteristics found in the Ibsen of Bergen days; in treatment it is much nearer "Olaf Liljekrans" than "Lady Inger of Östråt"; in fact, the latter, in technique, is a close second to "The Vikings at Helgeland." It is significant that between the completion of this latter, which is the culmination of what might be termed the objective use of ready-made situations, and "The Pretenders," which represents more of Ibsen's spiritual attitude, and which in treatment has a more intensive

way of unfolding character,—between these two in time of writing, Ibsen had gained a surety of technique without which his epic satires could never have been penned. He was thus disciplining his thought, which, as it became more original and drew more from the current life, forced him to recognise the limitations of verse as a medium of expression. This was perhaps brought home to him at the time he was planning "Love's Comedy," and when his romanticism, which in these early dramas took away from tragedy much of its cruelty, faded before his social satire, which looked for truth above any picturesque effectiveness of situation or of expression.

This, therefore, constituted Ibsen's work while in Bergen, although, when he left for Christiania, he had in his mind more than the mere outlines for his next play. Besides, though poor in purse, he returned to the capital, much surer of recognition than when he had left it in 1851.

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTIANIA (1857-1864)

EVERY genius seems to have allotted to him a period of direst poverty, and Ibsen was now to go through his Biblical quota of seven years. His marriage put upon him great responsibilities, which were further increased by the birth of a son, Sigurd, on December 23, 1859. As Director of the Norwegian Theatre he was scarcely able to make ends meet with the scant monthly allowance, and once more he turned to his friends, who stood by him in great need. There were debts behind him in Bergen, and as head of the secondary playhouse in Christiania, it was not to be supposed that his position would offer much hope for future increase in salary.

Whatever there was of true worth in the man would have had small showing but for many, among Botten-Hansen's circle, who put in his way the immediate means of helping him over difficulties. The *Illustreret Nyhedsblad* published his work and some appreciative reviews of his plays; and it would seem that everyone with whom he came in contact was intent on obtaining for him a grant of some kind. These men were to be the prime movers in Norwegian life: their scholarship was to form one of the chief sources from which Ibsen was eventually to draw detailed information. The efforts of this group in intellectual matters were to tell in the Norwegian advance a decade or so later. When they first began to meet under Botten-Hansen's leadership they were strong in their radical opinions and in their national attitude, but their discussions were soon so tempered through the restraining hands of a few members as

to make them more conservative, while their patriotism became wider and embraced the idea of a union of all Scandinavia. While the arguments were hottest, Ibsen would remain quietly observing everything, but refusing to indicate by word or gesture on which side his judgment leaned. And in their separate appeals the members of both factions claimed Ibsen as their own because of his quiescence and non-committal attitude.

The days were black for the poet; his letters measure the mood, and events conspired to make things appear desperate. He felt the chagrin over being left out of a compilation entitled "The Modern Norwegian Poets" (1859), and he saw his theatre dwindling in the little attractiveness it might have had at the first. But during this stress he and Björnson were again thrown together, for the latter's tenure at Bergen had been short-lived. They were drawn together as early as 1850, Björnson being in many ways far ahead of Ibsen in success; their ideas in the beginning were, however, not so separated as they soon came to be; in fact, "The Pretenders" exalted a thought, a kingship idea which Björnson had himself worked out in "Between the Battles." Likewise, at this moment they were both intent on Nationalism, a point which was to become one of the causes for their estrangement. On November 22, 1859, the two founded the "Norwegian Society," which included men who were fully determined to break up Danish supremacy in literary and dramatic lines. So ardent were they that they dubbed themselves "Nationalists," and, at their meetings, which were held in Botten-Hansen's rooms, he being one of the great

forces of the day, Ibsen so far came out of his solitude as to recite "Terje Vigen" and "Paa Vidderne" ("On the Heights"). To some extent the idea prompting the organization was provincial—a desire to check all intellectual superiority that was not "home-brewed."

In the different responses which Ibsen and Björnson were to give to this national movement lies the explanation for the difference in their character. The latter's personality was warm and large and enthusiastic; it was hard to destroy his faith, nor could one easily withstand the optimistic spirit which he always showed. On this account, he was to infuse into Ibsen a little of the confidence of which he was sorely in need. This did not mean, however, that Ibsen was ever to unfold, to become less aloof, to become less silent. Probably the wide difference in character between the two only served to draw them together, although Ibsen's reticence must have often been shocked by Björnson's openness and trust.

"The Vikings at Helgeland" had already been completed (1858), and it was possibly the manner in which it was treated by a Danish company at the Christiania Theatre that filled Ibsen's heart to overflowing in the newly organized national society.[1] Björnson also was loud in his demand that the new piece be played. But by the time the theatre which Ibsen controlled had slipped completely into insolvency, depriving the playwright-manager of back sal-

[1] See "Ein Stücklein von der Direktion des Christianiaer Dänischen Theatres;" Sämtliche Werke, Bde. 1, p. 396 [1858]. See in this same edition, "Vorwort zur ersten deutschen Ausgabe der Helden auf Helgeland," p. 509 [1876].

ary and of his position, he had become absolutely callous to the theatre as a practical proposition; he seemed to owe it a grudge for coming between him and his progress as an author. The bitterness was still rife within him when he wrote from Rome, on December 28, 1867, to Björnson, "For a poet the toil of a theatre is equivalent to a daily fœticide. The civil laws make this a punishable crime; I do not know if God is more lenient. . . . A man's gifts are not a property; they are a duty."

His next appointment (1863) was as "aestetisk konsulent" of the old Christiania Theatre, with a salary of less than £6 a month. His situation became more desperate still, and such friends as Bernard Dunker and Johan Sverdrup, no less than Björnson and Michael Birkeland later on, came to his assistance. There was likewise the added anxiety of waiting upon the decisions of those in authority to whom applications for monetary grants were made. It is agreeable to record one bright flash in this year 1863, when Björnson, after a two years' trip abroad, and Ibsen again met at Bergen, where during the month of June there was being held a Festival of Song. The two wrote poems for this occasion, and Ibsen was as near in holiday humour as he ever got to be. "The festival itself," so he wrote to the shipowner with whom he had stayed, "and the many lovable, unforgettable people I met at it, acted upon me like an inspiring church service. . . . They were all so good to me at Bergen."

This was the grateful cry of a man who within a few months had petitioned the King twice for aid, and in whose behalf Björnson was busy gathering to-

gether some private donations. Though Ibsen had gained the reputation of being aloof, of being cold and difficult to approach, there was, beneath his rough exterior, a longing and a sympathy for just that youthfulness of soul which he found in his Bergen host; being alive to the rich quality of life in others, enjoying the chivalric way some people had of looking at things,—there is a peculiar tragedy in his studied restraint, which was to grow into a settled habit.

On August 6, 1860, Ibsen addressed a petition to the King, asking for 400 specie-dollars (£90) from the fund for artists and scientists to travel abroad, so that he might spend some six months in London, Paris, and other large cities in Europe, Germany being mentioned in especial, in order to study dramatic art. Even thus early he was conscious of his own ability, and he did not regard the assistance he sought so much as a favour to himself, as the duty of the State to encourage the development of art and poetry. As Ibsen outlined in his petition, drama had heretofore received but scant national assistance, whereas in all other realms, large contributions had been forthcoming. This hesitancy on the part of the State to acknowledge the theatre was not due to any ignorance that of all arts drama dealt closest with reality; it was based entirely on the fear that any grant which might be made would go toward benefiting individual theatres or increasing private building funds. As a manager, playwright, and scenic artist, Ibsen felt that his experience warranted the grant being made him, but he was unsuccessful in his appeal.

He struggled through the next two years as best he could, and finally, on March 14, 1862, appealed to the Council of the University of Christiania for 120 specie-dollars (£27) from the fund for scientific research, to enable him, during the summer, to collect songs and legends current among the people of the remote coast districts. In March of the following year he made his report, intimating that he had contracted with the publisher, Tönsberg, to issue in book form the results of his journey; but the work never appeared, and the only published data on the subject were a few legends in the *Illustreret Nyhedsblad*. He had only been granted, after all, 110 specie-dollars, and so in recording the results of his first trip, he applied again for another 120 specie-dollars, receiving instead a sum equal to £22 10s. Ibsen was conscientious in asking only for the minimum sum, since he knew the localities richest in legendary lore,[1] and could reach the sources in the quickest manner possible. He must have displayed not only persistency, but keen discrimination and tact in his researches, for in one district alone he was successful in gathering seventy or eighty hitherto unpublished examples of popular Norwegian songs.

Financial obligations were pressing hard upon him, and he was determined to leave no channel unexplored; in quick succession, on March 10, 1863, and on May 27, he petitioned the King. In the first, he outlined his career, characterizing his several plays and laying particular stress upon the reception given

[1] The lasting effects of these investigations are to be found in the folklore background dominating "Brand" and "Peer Gynt."

to "The Vikings at Helgeland" throughout Scandinavia, and upon the completion of his rhymed satire, "Love's Comedy." He was likewise preparing an edition of his isolated poems. That his struggle was an imminent one, this petition of his for a yearly pension or salary of 400 specie-dollars bears evidence. He carried debts amounting to about £112, and the year's work on "The Vikings at Helgeland" had only netted him a profit of £31. In this condition, he felt that he would be forced to forsake Norway in an attempt to better his prospects. In April, 1863, Björnson received a pension of 400 rix-dollars and this encouraged Ibsen to ask for a travelling grant of 600 specie-dollars (£135) to spend a year in Rome and Paris. Thus we see that his eyes were looking toward the far horizon; perhaps poverty was forcing him away, but there was something deeper within the man, something that rested in his convictions which was prompting him away. It was in response to this last petition that Ibsen received on September 12, 1863, a grant of 400 specie-dollars, and, in the spring of the next year he set out, *via* Copenhagen and Berlin, for Rome, in which city he remained until the spring of 1868. The press was very bitter over Ibsen's receiving this grant, for the sting created by the publication of "Love's Comedy" in 1862 had not yet been forgotten.

When Ibsen left Christiania in 1864 there was another national influence which was to have some effect upon his future realistic period, and which, to some extent, directed him to the theme of "Love's Comedy," with its commonplace characters: a new school of prose fiction had developed in Norway, typi-

fied in the works of Björnson and Camilla Collett.[1] In the midst of the former's dealing with the same heroic materials which Ibsen was using, his peasant nature prompted him to write "Synnöve Solbakken," [2] in which the characters "are all good, estimable people, and their gentle piety, without any tinge of fanaticism, invests them with a quiet dignity." This was a new impetus for Ibsen. On the other hand, Mrs. Collett was, through the years, to have a distinct effect upon his social dramas, since most of her writing is marked by her desire to further the interests of women. Ibsen was always warm in his regard for her efforts. From Sorrento, in 1881, he wrote her, "The ideas and visions with which you have presented the world are not of the kind destined merely to live a barren life in literature"; and upon the celebration of her seventieth birthday, in 1883, his tribute to her culminated in these words: "Ideas grow and propagate themselves slowly with us in the North; progress is unobservable; nevertheless it is made. The Norway now in process of development will bear traces of your intellectual pioneer-work."

It might well be claimed that "The Vikings at Helgeland" is the last of Ibsen's plays in which the idea was definitely centralized in a romantic atmosphere, and made subservient to it; it ends the period of artificial picturesqueness, and points toward an artistic era in which his characters do not act by romance alone, but have a consuming theory of life which prompts all their actions. What "The

[1] Camilla Collett was Henrik Wergeland's sister.

[2] See Flom's preface to his edition of Björnson's "Synnöve Solbakken." John Anderson & Co., 1905.

"Kings at Heigeland" demonstrates more than anything else is that fact of Ibsen's imaginative power, [illegible] even though he try to squeeze the large, primal motives of legendary people into human proportion,[1] he thoroughly succeeds in creating an atmosphere of tragedy. It is not a preordained machine: the incidents do not push the current inevitably forward; still is Ibsen within the grip of French methods.

He had read extensively in the saga literature and he did not hesitate to draw generously from his sources: but his result was not a mere dramatization.[2] The plundering, of which he had been accused, was

[1] Edmund Gosse finds significant profit in comparing this drama with Morris's "The Lovers of Gudrun." He claims that in the latter "we are conscious of a less painful effort and of a more human result."

[2] The reader is referred to "Origines Islandicae; a collection of the most important sagas and other native writings relating to the settlement and early history of Iceland." Gudbrand Vigfusson and F. Y. Powell. [2 vols.] Oxford. 1905.—"Saga Time." J. F. Vicary.—"Story of Egil Skallagrimsson . . . an Icelandic family history of the 9th and 10th centuries. Translated from Icelandic by Rev. W. C. Green."—"Extracts from the Njàla." [In "Great Britain—Master of the Rolls. Chronicles and Memorials." 1887, v. 88,[1] pp. 319-[illegible]. 1894, v. 88[2] pp. 344-365.]—"La Saga de Nial." Tr. Rodolphe Dareste.—"Laxdæla Saga." Tr. from the Icelandic by [illegible]. C. Press. *Temple Classics*.—"Völsunga Saga: The Story of the Volsungs and Niblungs, with certain songs from the Elder Edda." Edited, with Introduction and notes, by H. Halliday Sparling.—"The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs." William Morris.—"Icelandic Literature. The Sagas. Ninth to Thirteenth Centuries." William Sharp. "Library of the World's Best Literature," Vol. [illegible], p. 8963.

perfectly justifiable, and, as a mere piece of welding the sources together, the finished drama is unique, for the unity of its design is unbroken. As a mere outline, it were well to consider exactly the amount of credit which should be given to the Icelandic literature. The main plot is dependent upon the "Völsunga Saga," embellished by incidents and motives taken from "Egil's Saga," "Laxdæla," and "Njàla"; of course these have more or less been modified. Jæger leans absolutely to the extreme side of doubting the intimate relation between "The Vikings" and the "Völsunga Saga." One may point to Sigurd Viking and Sigurd Fafnersbane, who both accomplished the same deed of daring for Hiördis and Brynhild; yet the women are not of the same value. There is also some relation between Dagny and Gudrun, who both try to temper the insatiable anger of their opposites, with the same consequences. From "Egil's Saga" Ibsen took the suggestion for Örnulf's dirge, and further traces are thus concisely recorded by Jæger:

"Örnulf's question concerning the death of Thorolf and the observation made by him in that connection, are suggested by Kveldulf's words upon the death of his son Thorolf; what Hiördis says of the bowstring is taken from Halgerde's famous saying upon the occasion of Gunnar of Hlidarende's last fight; while finally, in the tragic story told of the love of Kjartan and Gudrun in the 'Laxdæla Saga,' we have a narrative presenting many analogies to the fate of Sigurd and Hiördis."

A comparative study of these sources might be of interest to the saga student, but after it is general-

realized that Ibsen was thoroughly acquainted with them, one must then judge his play on its own merits; he himself stated clearly wherein these family sagas afforded him opportunity for drama treatment; therefore one must take his portraiture at the value he intended to place upon it. The measure of Sigurd Viking's stature with that of Sigurd Fafnersbane is the measure of the difference between Ibsen's treatment and the original saga spirit. In this difference lay the reason why the Scandinavian public regarded the play askance; they would have accepted their heroes in heroic proportions, but, reduced to human size, with a failure on Ibsen's part to reduce likewise the primitive passionate instincts, they saw the dignity and grandeur of their saga figures disappear entirely. Hiördis, instead of being a magnificent Valkyrie woman, descends to petty scheming, in order to satisfy in her breast the fermentation of mere sexual inclinations. If he had adhered to the Oehlenschläger desire to reproduce in true magnitude the life of this saga era, his men and women would have been somewhat different.[1] "It was not my aim," so he wrote, "to present our mythic world, but simply our life in primitive times." The fault is that in attempting the one he has confused them both. Yet, as a whole, "The Vikings at Helgeland" is a far

[1] In the foreword to the first German edition of "The Vikings at Helgeland" (1876), Ibsen emphasizes his position. See Sämtliche Werke [ed. Brandes, Elias, Schlenther], p. 509. Editions of the play appeared 1858, 1873 [two], 1875, 1878, 1885, 1894, 1898. French translation by Jacques Trigant-Geneste; German translations by Emma Klingenfeld and M. von Borch. See Halvorsen.

advance, both in technique and in colour, over anything Ibsen had yet accomplished.

The modern note in the play is an ethical one; it exhibits the Norwegian's inclination to show the consequences attendant upon a large flaw in character; Ibsen is later on to reinforce the idea, here brought forward, that such a lie as Sigurd told for Gunnar, when he slew the white bear guarding the bedchamber of Hiördis—the whole story is the dramatization of a Lie—is fraught with no lasting good, but may be the source of all evil. In the wild, intemperate feelings of these people, Ibsen had hopes of showing his own generation by contrast how weak they were beside the grandeur of a past age; but he frustrated his own schemes in his failure to create heroic illusion. The human standard requires a different scale of estimate.

The motive power of the piece centres in the character of Hiördis; she fills the canvas here as wholly as does Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare; throughout the scenes she moves with the subtle grace of a panther in the dark, lying in wait, poisoning by suggestion that grows upon such a simple character as Dagny. She has none of the nobility of Brynhild; she possesses much more of the sensuous upheaval of Hedda Gabler. She is the libertine in romantic garb; to be near her is to realize the throb of dangerous proximity; it is such feminine attractiveness which holds both Gunnar and Sigurd in thrall. Whether or not Ibsen intended it, she is much nearer the leman than the saga heroine. Professor Boyesen says, with considerable discrimination:

"She appeals to no modern sentiment; and the

demonic grandeur of her speech, which might well befit a Valkyrie, is simply repellent and unnatural in a mortal woman. Not a glimpse is there in Hiördis of the joyous and loving womanhood which is so beautifully revealed in the scene of the Edda, where Sigurd awakens Brynhild, and they burst into a pæan of praise of the sun. . . ."

This is the woman for whom Sigurd held a love which he sacrificed in order to aid Gunnar; there were three involved in that midnight venture—two Viking warriors and a ferocious white bear. It was not Hiördis's intention to gain a husband by testing his manhood; it was her desire to tempt; it was the animal nature within her that thrilled when she felt herself in the arms of someone. I quite agree with Max Beerbohm's feeling that she would have been as well satisfied in the embrace of the bear. And so these Icelandic Vikings hie themselves in different directions from Örnulf's abode; Gunnar with Hiördis, whom he did not win, and Sigurd, who contents himself with the fragile, conventional Dagny, to whom he gives the ring which Hiördis had that night taken from her bare arm for him, not knowing but that it was Gunnar himself.

The play begins at this point. Örnulf sails forth to reckon with these Vikings, and through four acts Hiördis, ever after blood, stirs up one furor upon another. Always suspicious, it is through her savage treatment of Kåre, the peasant, that Örnulf goes with his sons to rescue her child, whom she has sent away, fearful of her foster-father's intent. Through the workings of her fitful moods, the old warrior not only loses his grown sons, but even the youngest is

killed by reason of Hiördis's fanning the anger and suspicion of Gunnar into flame.

Against such feminine outbreaks a nature like Dagny's, sweet though it might be, is no match. In a fit of boasting, the secret escapes her that Sigurd was really the one to bear Hiördis from her bower. In all that preceded this, in all that follows, there is not exhibited in Hiördis any of the instincts of a full-blooded saga woman of nobility, or any realization of the power within her for good or evil. The Hiördis of this drama is a type of physical maturity moved by a purely physical desire to gratify her passion. Such is not the Brynhild as we know her, and Ibsen was fully cognizant of that fact. His creation of the character of Hiördis is not limited by any attempt at verisimilitude; his strokes are freer than in his delineation of Catiline or even of Lady Inger; yet, on the other hand, she is more of a portrait, more of an impersonal type, subject to forces outside of herself.

She did not know the meaning of love, talk though she might of being herself the only proper wife for Sigurd, since within her was the force to supplement that energy of the warrior—a force which she flaunts before the colourless femininity of Dagny. In the end, when she gives Sigurd his death wound, she would ride with him to Valhalla, and one is not convinced that when there she would sit beside him, content with him alone.

Now it is that Ibsen falls into bathos; one might accuse him of sentimental artificiality; there is none of the Christian spirit in Sigurd, yet in the end he cannot go with Hiördis on the last ride to Valhalla,

since he prays to the White God. Such a meting out of justice upon Hiördis is wholly the unwarranted mistake of the dramatist, whose inventiveness seems suddenly to have stopped. The feeling of the reader is one of undeniable indifference which way the story ends. Örnulf is the only figure for whom any sympathy is due; the others may go on their way, and it matters not whither their footsteps tend. The characters are all passionate, but their motives are not prompted by any legitimate reasons, save that they hate because it is their nature to hate, and that they love because they have gained something to love through the strength of their might. Therefore, one would almost be justified in denying them passion altogether, reducing their sensation to that of mere physical energy. The fault with "The Vikings at Helgeland" is that it errs in the name of humanity and does injustice to the superman.

Still the atmosphere of this drama is truly tragic; in its development it is indicative of the uncertain genius of a genuine dramatist, experimenting with material shaped by the known elements of a traditional life. The artist is advancing, feeling his way, practising with all species of literary form, using a very direct prose, yet not sure whether the poet in him is not, after all, his real nature. He adheres to his grouping which began in "Catilina," and which places Sigurd between Hiördis and Dagny, as it is later to place Brand between Agnes and Gerd. Hiördis becomes the mouthpiece for such a sentiment

'the strong women that did not drag out their lives

" which echoes the more positive sentiments of

d her picture of the woman's saga. Again

she says: "Happiness is worth a daring deed; we are both free if we but will it," yet her expression of such a philosophy is foreign to her nature. There are several passages like this which are indicative of flashes of the personal Ibsen which would creep in. But this play is further from Ibsen, the man, than his preceding experiments, even though in it Ibsen, the artist, may be said to have found himself. It is neither romantic nor philosophic; it is neither wholly picturesque nor human, nor heroic; it contains power, and because of this power it is effective in the general movement on the stage.[1] Granting that the characters are as they are, the second act is incomparably worked; the psychological machinery most skilfully manipulated.

The play is an excellent acting drama, despite the enormous demands created by the rôle of Hiördis, which it is difficult for any actress entirely to encompass. It is almost too far-fetched to accept Ibsen's avowal that in the depiction of his Valkyrie heroine he used the same model as was in his mind when Svanhild of "Love's Comedy" was conceived,

[1] A performance of the play was given at the London Imperial Theatre in 1903, with Ellen Terry as Hiördis; Gordon Craig, during the production, experimented with his theory of stage lighting. See Max Beerbohm in *Saturday Review*, April 25, 1903, vol. 95, pp. 517-18; also Huneker's description in "Iconoclasts." In America the play was for the first time given, and very creditably so, by the students of the American Academy of Dramatic Art. This was in the spring of 1907. Halvorsen notes performances at Trondhjem, February 10, 1859; Stockholm, 1875; Munich, April 10, 1876; Dresden, October, 1876; Vienna, October 26, 1876; Berlin, February 11, 1890. See Halvorsen for other dates.

yet so he confessed to Peter Hansen in 1870. Notwithstanding the negative characteristics of the piece, it contains much of the very highest poetic feeling, and the surety of its treatment, if not of its characterization, lends to it undoubted distinction.

The play was published in 1858 through the assistance of Botten-Hansen, and in his petition of 1863 to the government Ibsen refers to it as his "best paid work."[1] As we have noted, it was refused by the Theatre Royal of Copenhagen, but Ibsen had the satisfaction of recording later on that between 1875 and 1877 it was performed there twenty-nine times. The following dates, however, will serve as an excellent indication of the fact that although such men as Heiberg criticised the play unthinkingly—or at any rate allowed their provincial prejudices to run away with them—the majority of verdicts throughout Denmark and Sweden, as well as Norway, were favourable. The Christiania Norske Theatre on November 24, 1858, the Bergen Theatre on March 4, 1859, and the Christiania Theatre on April 11, 1861, all gave performance of "The Vikings at Helgeland," showing that, although Ibsen pecuniarily might be in a difficult position, he was nevertheless on the road to serious recognition.

[1] On March 27, 1881, Ibsen wrote to Hagbard Berner from Rome regarding the matter of copyright, and outlined the fate of "The Vikings," which the Christiania Theatre had threatened to use without royalty, provided Ibsen did not accord with their terms. See Correspondence, Letter 151.

CHAPTER VII

A SATIRIC INTERRUPTION

CHRONOLOGICALLY, "Love's Comedy" seems to be misplaced, for in its spirit it belongs virtually to Ibsen's second period, although in actual conception it preceded "The Pretenders." Yet few critics have emphasized the fact that, for some years before, the germ for this satire had been percolating through his isolated poems which have already been noted; not only was there felt therein the presence of a keen cynical streak, but there was also the same laudation of memory, over and above any attainment of the object of one's desire—the very thought upon which his play was to be founded. Away with summer, he sings, there is the memory of it to send one on his road; what are the joys of a brief spring-time to the recollection, the vibrant remembrance which lasts one throughout old age! The whole subject of "Love's Comedy" is couched in one line of Ibsen's "Ball-room Memories," referring to the ideal love: "Ich habe sie gefunden—was will ich noch mehr?" He would rather see the woman he loved in dreams than find her a reality!

These poems were forerunners of the larger idea, more fully, more brilliantly worked out, although, in its logical conclusions, leaving the reader in doubt as to whether Ibsen at this time had any solution at all to this problem of love and marriage other than the solution which he had but recently followed himself—marriage based on a compromise between Guldstad's and Falk's ideas.

In matter of form, "Love's Comedy" exhibits an impatience on the part of the author; he had tried

prose and evidently had become dissatisfied, inasmuch as, upon the authority of Gosse, there is still extant in manuscript a rough draft of this play, entitled "Svanhild: A Comedy in Three Acts and in Prose: 1860." But there is likewise a juggling with the rhymed couplet in the final version which might well indicate his dissatisfaction with the ballad measure. As Mr. Herford has translated it,[1] the drama jars by reason of its evident straining after the word endings; the human flashes, the darts of bravado and wit are so plentiful, so spontaneous, that they only make one realize how artificial is the medium of rhyme. In point of arriving at any definite conclusions, it is doubtful whether Ibsen knew exactly where his Pegasus or his pen was going to take him. Undoubtedly the play represents his unsettled state of mind, and on that account it betrays a certain immature struggle with any phase of life worth struggling with. Here, for the first time, we receive at full tilt the force of his indignation, not definitely aimed, but still foreboding future social criticism.

It has been noted that Ibsen was much interested in the pioneer work of Björnson and Mrs. Collett. The latter had issued her "The Sheriff's Daughters," in which she had attacked the shams underlying engagements and marriages, customs which Ibsen himself soon after assailed, even going so far as to apply certain similes which she had used in her novel. But Mrs. Collett was seriously interested in the woman's side and in the woman's fate, whereas, despite the fact that Ibsen has been over-emphasized

[1] See edition: Love's Comedy. Tr. by C. H. Herford. Duckworth, 1900.

as showing sympathy in the feminine plea for more freedom, he was far from being wholly absorbed in their welfare as women; to him they merely represented a certain weight in the general balance of the human and social scale, and it was the larger problem of humanity which interested him. On the other hand, though Ibsen might declare his attitude to be the true attitude, none the less, there is, in the person of Svanhild, as well as in Solveig, Agnes, and Hilda, a suspicion of glorification, a tinge of the romantic, which always dominated in his regard for womanhood. It is said that he read Mill's "Subjection of Women" with great show of irritation; and his impatience became still more apparent in his response to a toast given one day before a ladies' club in Christiania. His solution of the woman question, whether it relate to Nora's or Mrs. Alving's or Rebecca West's fate, always bore in mind the consequences to society at large. His opinion is thus plainly stated:

"All that I have composed has not proceeded from a conscious tendency. I have been more the poet and less the social philosopher than has been believed. I have never regarded the women's cause as a question in itself, but as a question of mankind, not of women."

"Love's Comedy" represents more the impertinence of youth than the daring of the philosopher; it is a brilliant bit of wild nature let loose; it has some of the abandon of "Peer Gynt" as well as some hints of small characterizations in "Brand." One might even stretch a point and say that Ibsen had set himself the task, without quite realizing it, of

finding a third kingdom of marriage and love combined, which he found afterwards would have to establish itself in its own natural way, even as he found, after his own marriage, that his ideals regarding how he and his wife of the future would dwell together upon separate floors beneath one roof, had to be changed to accord with the conditions of serious living.

In 1870, Ibsen wrote to Peter Hansen:

"Not until I was married did more serious interests take possession of my life. The first outcome of this change was a long poem—'Paa Vidderne' ('On the Heights'). The desire for emancipation which pervades this poem did not, however, receive its full expression until I wrote 'Love's Comedy,' a book which gave rise to much talk in Norway. People mixed up my personal affairs in the discussion, and I fell greatly in public estimation. The only person at that time who approved of the book was my wife. . . . My countrymen did not understand, and I did not choose to make them my father-confessors. So they excommunicated me. All were against me."

The reasons for the sudden disapproval of "Love's Comedy" are stated in Ibsen's preface[1] to the second edition of the play (1867). In the course of his remarks, he said:

"I committed a grave error in publishing the book in Norway. The time, as well as the place, was unfortunately chosen. The poem aroused a storm of opposition more powerful and more far-reaching than most books can boast of—and this, amidst a people whose overwhelming majority was either antagonistic to all

[1] See Henrik Ibsens Sämtliche Werke. Vol. I, p. 505.

things literary, or else totally without interest in them.

"The reception did not greatly surprise me. 'The healthy realism'—and if not healthy, then the realism, to which we Norwegians may rightly lay claim, compels us, in a very evident and a very natural way, to seek for the idea in the solution of the problem. This point of view creates an inner consolation, but does not exactly produce clearness.

"As I therefore strongly criticised love and marriage in my comedy, it was no more than natural to expect the public to raise a cry of protest in the name of love and marriage. The disciplining and training of thought which are necessary for the full understanding of the errors underlying this love and marriage problem have not been experienced by the majority of my reading public. And it is not my intention here to give them that necessary instruction. A preface is no A B C."

As we have said, there is no definite *objet de guerre* in "Love's Comedy"; Ibsen had been engaged in many enterprises conducing toward national furtherance, and he had seen the so-called aristocratic peoples looking askance at him; since his "Norma: a Politician's Love," the civic conditions in Norway had settled down into such an indifferent state that nothing could be drawn from them at the moment to serve his satiric aims. He therefore decided to throw a bomb into the intimate social midst—to attack marriage and the panoply of love. But, in doing so, he committed the same error that he made in pitting against Fru Inger a power as mighty as herself, if not more picturesque, in the figure of Nils Lykk-

In this present instance, he took from the weight of his argument by approving the marriage of convenience which Guldstad in the end arranges between himself and Svanhild. Such a mixture, such a contradiction as he thus deals with obscures the human application of his story, leaving one high and dry as to the sane solution—giving the reader much that is brilliant, something that is partly true, but, nevertheless, a great deal that is futile, like Bernard Shaw's "You Never Can Tell."

That "Love's Comedy" raised a storm of protest, however, is of small wonder. It was completed in 1862, and during the same year Jonas Lie gave Ibsen £35 for the privilege of printing the piece as a supplement to his paper.[1] Its sting was instantly recognised, and its one-sidedness became more evident in its negative than in its positive aspects. At the University of Christiania, when it was learned that Ibsen had applied for a grant, some dignitary was heard to exclaim that "the person who had written 'Love's Comedy' deserved a stick rather than a stipend!"

The opinions were diverse as to its merits; there were those ready to raise the cry of immorality and others to rail against the inartistic rhyme, and still other conventional souls to deplore the caricature of

[1] The second edition, 1867, and thereafter, as follows: 1873, 1877, 1884, 1891, 1895. French translation by Vicomte de Colleville and Fritz de Zepelin. See also *Mercure de France*, Feb.-Mar., 1896; *St. James's Magazine*, vol. 40, London, 1881. German translation by M. von Borch. See *Morgenbladet*, 1863, Nos. 74-81, M. J. Monrad; also *Mercure de France*, July, 1897 [Per Eketrä].

Mr. Strawman,[1] one of the first pastors at whom Ibsen so loved to point his finger of scorn. Reviewers began to look for analogies.[2] And, regarding the play from a distance of years, the later critics hit upon the statement that thus early, in his attitude for and against the social institution of marriage, the young dramatist was serving as a mouthpiece for a re-statement of the views of Kierkegaard, in his "Either—Or" and "Stages on the Path of Life," upon the same subject. It is rather futile, from the Ibsen standpoint, to spend much time in contrasting the latter's position with that of Plato; Professor Gosse has done this and has also, with little significance, save to emphasize the racial difference between Englishmen and Norwegians, noted the fact that at the period when Ibsen was finishing his piece of pungent satire, Tennyson in his "Sea Dreams" was declaring that as for himself he loathed satire.

We are overstretching the critical province when we apply standards to Ibsen far beyond him and in no way commensurate with his limitations. One always has to grant him a point to stand upon, and then he is thoroughly capable, through the dexterity of craftsmanship, of maintaining his argument; but his weakness nearly always is to be found in the very point upon which he stands. A gifted tongue may argue truly from one side, making the reader for an instant forget the value of the other side; yet none the less does this other value exist. On the one hand,

[1] In 1866 the Storthing had occasion to refer to Strawman in refusing Ibsen his petition.

[2] A comparison is often made between "Love's Comedy" and Heiberg's "Inseparables."

we may say that idealism is prone to afford a man or a woman poor preparation for facing the practicalities of life—that, on the heights, neither of them is capable of fathoming dual responsibility; and on the other hand, we may say that realism is only one phase of life after all—a phase where men and women are sometimes prone to forget that the spirit needs exaltation.

The subject of "Love's Comedy" is a juggle between two extremes, and in the end we almost detect another example of the characteristic which Ibsen at isolated periods in his life exhibited; I refer to his habit of laughing at his own foibles. For Guldstad, at the close of the play, is willing to let Falk go his way with the memory of his love for Svanhild, while the "official" forms of love-making continue in the world undisturbed. As for Guldstad, after having, in his matter-of-fact business way, given every chance for Falk and Svanhild to argue whether in the years of marriage together they could maintain the intensity of their present passion, he slips in and claims the prize, knowing full well that the married life does not consist wholly of dreams.

Despite its brilliancy, Brandes was right when he declared "Love's Comedy" to be lacking in refinement. One's curiosity is intellectually piqued to follow the consequences, but the world was never won by a sneer nor has sympathy ever been gained for a boor. Falk's name is perhaps used symbolically. In his translation of the piece, Gosse goes so far as to speak of "Hawk" and "Miss Magpie," thus retaining some elements of a morality play. The bitterness in the hero's soul is that which Ibsen had pent

up in his own breast; it is not a deep searching after great truths, but a fitful flashing that burns and irritates and creates only a small amount of good. By its very indefiniteness, by its lack of remedy and its lack of any clear statement as to the solution, the effect produced by "Love's Comedy" is that it gives an impertinent wrench to conscience. At first the public was incensed; then Ibsen found his own private life defamed; but by degrees people began to look within themselves to see whether there was truth in it, and they hated him for the doubt he cast upon them and their holiest bonds of attachment.

Rather than bring upon himself the existence which custom has said must attend every marriage, Falk would love and then renounce love, feasting instead on its memory; mayhap there is a bit of the old Schopenhauer in this pessimism.[1] But when he leaves, after Svanhild is made to choose between him and Guldstad—reminding one of the situation of Candida placed between Morrell and Marchbanks—Ibsen does not develop in Falk any vivid characteristics—he disappears as a theory, whereas Shaw's Shelley prototype is a man when he is turned out in the night.

But even though bravado, and irony, and pessimism are the uppermost notes sounding through "Love's Comedy," none the less is Ibsen an idealist and a romanticist—for the poetry of his piece certainly does exist in his near approach to a very noble conception of love in the abstract, even if the mani-

[1] Boyesen also sees in Ibsen this Schopenhauer mood, centring in his personal resentment, which changed to the Voltaire attitude, then to the revolutionary radicalism of Rousseau, thence to the roaring indignation of Carlyle.

festations, the possible applications, seem absurd. In his railing over a pseudo-love which social conditions have created, one is probably only too prone to identify his ill-temper with the acceptance of no love at all. Svanhild's remarks bear impress of Ibsen's mental attitude, while Falk's defiance only represents a part of his critical bearing.

The defiant ring was that of youth; in view of his own indignation and of his own theory, Ibsen was in no position to realize that the world also had a viewpoint which was entitled to respect and to consideration; he was an iconoclast in a thoughtless way. But, nevertheless, the originality and advance in this play are to be discovered in the fact that he here has the point of view; that he is regarding humanity and society closely in order to establish a better, a fuller system of life. It is not the sweeping improvement he is after; it is an evolutionary change he would exact in the world. In other words, Arthur Symons is correct in his statement that "the man of science has already laid his hand upon the poet."

For the better protection of true love, Ibsen places an anathema upon the old order; with extreme confidence in an idea more immediately consuming than permanent in truth, he almost borders upon frivolity, parrying blows and giving thrusts that are more striking than they are telling. "With Ibsen," says Symons, "it is a petty anger, an anger against natures and it leads to a transcendentalism which is empty and outside nature."

It is hard to believe that Falk's renunciation added strength and sweetness to his personality, nor is it made very evident in the text that Svanhild, in her

ready acceptance of Guldstad in the end, was at all matured by the memory of her ideal love for another. The merchant, keen and cold and calculating though he might be, was, nevertheless, an idealist after his worldly fashion; he was not impervious to the laws of nature, neither was he anxious to override the laws of custom. What he offers in his own way—and it is a way which, Ibsen wishes to impress upon us, represents the prose of life—is a great deal; with all his youthful and ardent idealism, Falk cannot offer anything that will outlast the wear and tear of time. Guldstad might almost be regarded as the normal point in the comedy—the sane view, even though not the highest view.

The quality of humour in "Love's Comedy" is not of the kindly order; but though it is bitter, it is not the stagnant, brooding spleen of quietude which threatens to make one temperamentally unhealthy. It is an active irritant. Ibsen's observation of humanity is here for the first time given its modern expression; it was to gain in unerring skill through "Peer Gynt" and "Brand," until it began its definite cast of social contrast in "The League of Youth" and "Pillars of Society."

Ibsen "scourged love in the name of love itself"; this is the opinion of Jæger, but he did not go far enough; he championed the rationalism of Guldstad above the infatuation or perhaps natural inclination of Falk, but he was in reality groping for something else. The one positive worth of the play, from an ethical side, was that it stirred up Scandinavia to weigh the truth of the accusations, however protests might be raised as to the value of the argument.

There is a difference in being a "lady-love" and in being a "wife"; this difference is to be found in the recognition of mutual obligations between the man and the woman. The varnish and veneer of romanticism and sentimentalism are repellent to the vision of Ibsen. All is vanity, saith the preacher, but I do not believe, with Huneker, that Ibsen saw nothing good in love.

The dialogue of "Love's Comedy" gives one a sense of dealing with real characters in a small community of Norway: Falk, the author; Lind, the divinity student; Guldstad, the merchant; Stiver, the law clerk; Strawman, the country clergyman, are sketched in very skilful manner; they gravitate around this theme of love—each representing a particular phase, but all, save Falk, being on the side of convention. The ladies, with the exception of Svanhild, are of the accepted class—Miss Jay, a chatterer of the sentimental kind, who upholds the idea of certain "official" stages in the lover's progress from engagement to marriage; Mrs. Halm, a mother of the "marriageable daughter" type; Mrs. Strawman, the matron. The many scenes, as they unfold themselves, serve as examples of a consuming quality found in the entire Ibsen repertoire—the exalting of trivialities, which, *per se*, are valueless, but which, in the general effect, are dramatically essential. The power to hold the interest through the sheer force of talk, and of "gossipy" talk at that, is not given to every dramatist. Herein, Ibsen must have profited by his French associations, though, with his accustomed method of improving upon others, he added to his dialogue the pregnant value of the commonplace.

The three scenes of "Love's Comedy" transpire in the garden of Mrs. Halm's villa on the Drammensvejen at Christiania. In brilliant rapidity, the gush of sentiment, the thrall of custom, the prosaic acceptance of life are unfolded in their several ways. Once more, Ibsen resorts to the worn-out stage subterfuge of misunderstandings. Falk at first is aware that Lind loves Svanhild, when he is really in love with her sister Anna; then Falk believes that Guldstad is after destroying Lind's chances with Anna, while all the time he really is casting looks toward Svanhild. It is a cheap way of developing situation, but one in vogue at the time "Love's Comedy" was written. Ibsen probably could not then have managed his plot in any other fashion.

Falk's character offers glints of Ibsen himself as well as suggestions for the masculine selfishness which dominates the persons of all of the Ibsen men, like Helmer in "A Doll's House." "Darkness to me is fair and light is cheerless," he says, echoing the poet who once was apothecary; "Personality's one aim and end, Is to be independent, free and true," he continues. Falk does not seek the highest results of love; he wishes to live, live, not caring for the outcome of love.

As far as analysis is concerned, the love he offers to Svanhild is almost as wild and as impossible as the love he demands from her. Ibsen, in most of his early plays, was unfortunate in creating the impression that the only love a woman should consider full and true was of the kind outlined by Falk:

> "To me you must present
> What God to you so bountifully lent.

I speak in song what you in dreams have meant . . .
O yield your music as she [the bird] yielded hers!
My life shall be that music set to verse!"

Does Ibsen mean to say that those who marry should not be in love; and that those who love should not marry?[1] I think he was ironical, growling because it was his nature to, but not with the mastiff growl of Carlyle. In the very fact that he nowhere stated definitely his exact position as to this love he rails about and this other love which Falk champions, Ibsen was showing his usual reticence about answering questions. But he was thoroughly in earnest in his attack, much more so than Shaw when he wrote "Man and Superman."

There is some of Brand in Falk; both held steadfastly to their convictions, both were willing to face the consequences. In the dialogue, we catch faint Ibsen tones relating to the ill-starred times in Norway, and one clear conviction which, though coming from Falk, represents the sincerity of the author:

"Be citizens of the time that is—but then
Make the time worthy of the citizen."

And so the general impression left in the mind of the reader is that the main theme of "Love's Comedy" represents Ibsen's whole mood at the time rather than his full conviction. Inasmuch as he felt himself excommunicated by the tumult created by the appearance of his drama, one is not surprised to find that

[1] Wicksteed states the proposition more clearly than most commentators: "Being 'in love' is essential to an ideal marriage, but upon the other truth [stress should be laid as well], that it is not enough for an ideal marriage."

the theatres remained shy of it until November, 1873, when Josephson presented it in Christiania.[1] By that time the third edition of the book had been issued, the text having been subjected to the customary revision. While Ibsen was in Frascati, during August, 1866, he proposed the second edition to Hegel, who published it at Copenhagen in May, 1867, having previously manœuvred to suppress any of the old copies remaining.

If regarded in its entirety, "Love's Comedy" is fraught with no grandeur of defeat; the exit of Falk is not elevating, but is indicative of the desolation of utter loneliness; his renunciation left him impoverished in spirit as well as made him a beggar in happiness. None of Ibsen's plays is quite so barren of positive results.

[1] The drama did not reach Stockholm until November, 1889; Berlin, December, 1896; Théâtre de l'Œuvre, June, 1897 [Lugné-Poë]; Copenhagen, May, 1898. In America it was given at the Hudson Theatre, New York, on March 23, 1908.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LAST OF THE SAGAS

THE kingdom of God lies within us. The value to be drawn from Ibsen's work rests in the evolutionary aspect which dominates his dramas. Although he might attack the social shams underneath love and marriage, the official chains that shackle the free exercise of will, he was none the less only a destructive critic of the hypocrisy underlying love, and of the blind ignorance exhibited by those men and women assuming the responsibilities of the marriage bond. It is this individual responsibility which is the redeeming side of all the Ibsen theories. Though he might attack false love, he was the firmest believer in the regenerative qualities of true love; though he might denounce the religion that hides truth behind a veil of dogma, he was a man of almost severe spiritual self-examination. In his ethical quandaries he brings himself to the state of hyper-sensitiveness.

"Love's Comedy" might be considered purely as an example of youthful indignation; it was, however, a very natural transitory stage from a period of suppressed resentment to a greater, more lasting and more mature period of thought. It will be remembered that after writing "The Vikings at Helgeland," Ibsen had bethought him of "The Pretenders," his interest being absorbed, as early as 1858, in Håkon Håkonsson's Saga, which for the time being was brushed aside in favour of the satire. But though Ibsen might vent his anger in a bold and confident manner, there was entering within him a doubt as to his own capabilities. He was somewhat older than Björnson, but he was not regarded as of the same weight, and so he

commenced the analysis of this discrimination of fortune between the two, which is assuredly a part of the contrast between Håkon and Skule. This concept began to assume shape soon after his meeting with Björnson at the Bergen Festival of Song. In the summer of 1863, he was hard at work upon the manuscript, and, on his own authority, the book was completed in a very short while, for it was published in October, 1863, bearing the date 1864.

Ibsen had much material at hand to work upon; there was the suggestion of this contrast of personages already existing in Oehlenschläger's "Aladdin";[1] there was the actual history, which he distorted less than in any of his other historical dramas; there was, as Mr. Archer suggests, the model for Bishop Nicholas in Björnson's "King Sverre"; and, furthermore, his smaller poems were indicative of the spiritual uncertainty which is the consuming theme of the play.

In his treatment of facts, Ibsen no longer finds need to mould them, to shift them to his artificial requirements; in "Catilina," in "Lady Inger," he did not hesitate to take away from historical character its true perspective; but now, instead of foreshortening, he worked a deeper scheme with his art. He added to

[1] "Aladdin: oder, die Wunderlampe." Dramatisches Gedicht von A. G. Oehlenschläger. 2 vols. Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1820. See also the English version of Oehlenschläger's "Correggio," containing sketch of the autobiography of O., translated by Eliza B. Lee. Boston: Phillips & Sampson, 1846. In addition see Longfellow's translations. See "Library of the World's Best Literature," under Oehlenschläger, for introductory essay by W. M. Payne, and translations taken from Sir Theodore Martin's version of "Aladdin."

his faithfulness of portraiture the substance of his own philosophy of doubt; instead of relying solely on a romantic value, he essayed and successfully created a more significant worth, a more vital thought.

The incident in Oehlenschläger of the stealing of Aladdin's lamp by Nureddin was more subtly used by Ibsen in his depiction of Skule's taking the king-thought from Håkon; and Skule's failure at the moment when victory seemed nearest is counterbalanced by Nureddin's letting slip the lamp just when the genie awaited his dictates. Taking J. E. Sars as a basis for the historical,[1] it becomes instantly apparent how closely Ibsen adhered to actual fact. Håkon IV. ruled in Norway from 1217 to 1262; his grandfather, Sverre, had been crowned at Bergen in 1184, meeting opposition from the clergy; these latter were in such power that they were feared greatly, even by royalty; for Norway, in 1162, had been made a fief of St. Olaf, and it had been decreed by the Church that only he was the prince of the land who received through the Pope's representative the right to rule. This explains the importance attached in the play to the failure on the part of Skule to have homage done him on St. Olaf's shrine, and to Peter's desecration of the holy altar. Håkon represented the idea of divine right; his faith rested in a firm conviction that the people were with him. Skule was the aristocrat whose daughter had married the king; he was leader of a party whose power had waned; this realization made his opposition to the king all

[1] The reader is also referred to "Scandinavian History." E. C. Otté. London: Macmillan.

the more persistent, but no movement, as events prove, can succeed without the support of popular sentiment. Ibsen goes deeper than this; he attributes Skule's failure to a lack, within him, of the innate qualities of kingship. As he states, a man may die for another's cause, but in life he must live for his own. This is just where Skule of the play is weakest; having no abiding belief in his own right to be king, he attempted to base that belief upon the thought of another; but his spiritual confidence eventually deserted him and sent him to his ruin. It is curious to note the tendency Ibsen had to make use of the old Catholic theory of retribution, of atonement, of chastisement.

In what way are critics justified in comparing Håkon-Björnson with Skule-Ibsen? By the time the former had returned to Norway in 1860 from his trip through Italy, fortune was smiling upon him as persistently as it was frowning on Ibsen. The personality of Björnson was more popular than that of Ibsen, and with the success which followed the publication of his genial sketches, there came also an exultant confidence in his power. In his secretive way, Ibsen was working just as assiduously; to his manner of thinking he was just as faithfully fulfilling his mission. But when he came to regard Björnson, his confidence in himself and in his abilities failed him. Since the publication of "Love's Comedy," he had been regarded slightingly; critics, in their estimates, had spoken of him in an off-hand manner; and only the publication of the melodramatic "Terje Vigen," which in narrative power is not unlike Browning's "Ivàn Ivànovitch," saved him from being wholly ignored.

Here the comparison ends; while in Skule's scepticism we note the scepticism of Ibsen, the latter was only gathering strength to combat the elements; he did not succumb to this momentary doubt. As Jæger aptly says, "His was one of those natures which are not subdued, but rise under adverse conditions. As the bitter quinine gives strength to the nerves, so the bitterness of his circumstances strengthened, little by little, his confidence in himself."

"The Pretenders" is one of Ibsen's strongest dramas; from the standpoint of construction, he has become more generous in his distribution of scene, portending the variety and scope of his succeeding satires. This is the first play which depends upon the originality of its characters through the reflective power of the poet; if its failure in regard to construction is to be found anywhere, it lies in the mistake made of killing Bishop Nicholas when the play was but half finished. This throws the plot into two distinct divisions—one in which the Bishop serves as the hero; the other in which the doubt created by the Bishop acts in his place. A certain amount of melodramatic interest is lost with the removal of this figure—a figure suggesting in every outline a picture of Sir Henry Irving as Becket. The Bishop is far more individually conceived in his Mephistophelian guise than any character thus far drawn by Ibsen.

The literal translation of the word "Kongs-Emnerne," which has been rendered into the shortened form of "The Pretenders," is "the stuff from which kings are made." According to Ibsen's analysis, he is ruler, he is right, he is king who has fortune on his side. Håkon's claim to the throne is based on the fire

ordeal; it is proved by his originating of the King-thought. From the midst of a number of pretenders to Norway's crown two types are made prominent for the sake of contrasting two mental attitudes, which Ibsen believed he thoroughly understood. Between them he places the crafty Bishop, who, now upon this side and now upon that, is the cause of Skule's planning to gain all the power, since he already holds the state seal. This Duke seems intent upon being first man in the realm, although at the outset there is that within him which would fain make peace with conditions as Olaf willed them—the conditions which mark Håkon as the duly elected ruler. The Bishop moves slowly, sowing seeds of dissension—petty manœuvring which sets at variance the subordinates of the court, as well as unsettling confidence on all sides.

Nicholas learns of Skule's life curse, "to stand so near to the highest—with an abyss between"; he is keen enough to realize the weakness in Skule's make-up—the weakness of indecision closely akin to the philosophical inaction of Hamlet. He uses this weakness as capital for his own dark designs. He learns from the Duke the tragedy of ill-fortune which has always pursued him through life, which has kept him from the throne, bringing him nearer step by step, until now he possesses all but the highest post.

Then and there they have it out—this Bishop and this would-be ruler. Nicholas declares that Skule dare not break all bridges behind him, defending one alone with his life. That is what Håkon does, and that is why he is King. The greatest work, perhaps, is done by the greatest man, and he may be, most

likely, the bravest man. Despite the villainy of Nicholas, he has an infinite amount of perspicacity, and there is some truth in what he further says:

"The most fortunate man is the greatest man. It is the most fortunate man that does the greatest deeds —he whom the cravings of his time seize like a passion, begetting thoughts he himself cannot fathom, and pointing to paths which lead he knows not whither, but which he follows and must follow till he hears the people shout for joy, and, looking around him with wondering eyes, finds that he has done a mighty deed."

But in this analysis of the right of Håkon to rule Nicholas shows his lack of moral view. His idea of the right is the stoic Brand's attainment at the cost of lives nearest and dearest, but devoid of Brand's religious enthusiasm. He questions the right of Håkon's right; he advises Skule to win the top by exerting his strength and standing upon others; to hate a party not because of the principles underlying it, but simply should it happen that the constituents of that party were against him; to uphold the belief that a party should not represent conviction, but should bring, primarily, personal gain. "Whatever is helpful to you is good," whispers the evil-tongued Bishop, behind whose suavity lies the unextinguishable thirst for dissension. Since he, Nicholas, cannot be the highest in the realm, he will play with the highest as though they were pawns upon a chess-board. The Bishop, likewise, possesses his kingship ambitions.

In this humour is born the idea of planting in the mind of Skule a doubt as to whether Håkon's title to the throne is clear—a complication which, however

accurate from an historical view, serves as a theatrical and a cheap accessory to further the action of the play. What if Håkon were not king-born? Ibsen is prone to over-depend upon the subterfuge of illegitimacy; even Skule, as it later seems, has a son born out of wedlock—the very Peter who displays the confidence in his father's power, which the father does not have in himself. There is that in the working out of Ibsen's idea which only accentuates the artificial planning of his situations. No matter how swift the action, Skule is always sounding the doubt; he knows that while Håkon believes himself king, no ill-savoured report concerning him can undo his girdle of strength which lies in his unshakable belief in himself. The distinction between Skule and Håkon is therefore one dependent entirely upon the utter hopelessness of making any effective attack upon Håkon's strength in the face of Skule's weakness. "I am a king's arm," cries the latter, "mayhap a king's brain as well; but he is the whole king."

Professor Dowden interprets "The Pretenders" tersely in the sentence: "Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers." It is probably because of these co-existing and opposing elements that Mr. Huneker recognised here a glimmer of the "Emperor and Galilean" motive. But while in the former drama Ibsen proved very conclusively that naught could come of a compromise between doubt and faith, he most assuredly established his argument in the latter that out of a balance of full-blooded paganism and unadulterated Christianity might spring the accomplishment of his third estate.

By the end of the second act, Bishop Nicholas is

master of the situation; events concur, put in motion by this venerable devil, to set the Earl against the King. Skule is thrust in a position to misjudge Håkon; otherwise, there is a vein of noble amenableness to reason in him, which would prompt him to submit to the inevitable once the right of Håkon was proved, once the doubt of his illegitimacy was removed.

The death scene of Nicholas is mightily conceived; its effectiveness on the stage is in striking contrast with the other parts of the drama, which are more in the chronicle spirit. The slenderness of his life's thread now makes the Bishop zealous to cram all of his work within the limits measured by the rounds in his almost empty hour-glass. If he must die, then Norway must be left with something by which to remember him; he would attack the King's soul, and the Duke's soul as well; he would set in perpetual motion a doubt which he tells Skule will unsettle the steadfast faith Håkon has in himself. When he dies, he has indeed accomplished his ambitions well, the remainder of the play serving to show how well.

Skule and Håkon are placed on either side of Margrete, daughter and wife; here again the Ibsen balance is used. Fortune has further smiled upon the King in assuring him a successor to the throne, even though the right to that succession be not thoroughly established, because of the suspicion cast upon it by Nicholas. But the old Bishop dies, having burned beforehand a document which might have dispelled the doubt in Skule's mind, and having failed to unsettle Håkon's confidence.

Skule's position is one of continual wavering, al-

though he compromises by proposing to Håkon that they share the kingdom, each independent of the other. Håkon, freed of the doubt which Skule has, stands upon a firm foundation of belief in his divine right; he will therefore rule over all or none. Never, in all Skule's opportunities, has he done a single King's task, whereas there lay clearly before Håkon a distinct realization of what the King's task should be. The realm has been built up, a mass unconsecrate; it lacks life wherewith to make it vital. What, therefore, is Håkon's King-thought? "Norway has been a kingdom, it shall become a people," he declares. Skule, the aristocrat, is shocked by the daring boldness of the idea; yet he little knew that this was the moment of temptation for him. Throughout Håkon's speeches, which are the measure of his confidence, we detect the iteration of Ibsen's belief in his own personal and God-imposed mission. "I have done so little yet," declares the King; "but I hear the unerring voice of the Lord calling to me: Thou shalt do a great King's-work in Norway!" The sense of this responsibility was always uppermost in Ibsen's mind; it made him sacrifice in life that which otherwise would have brought him contentment. But he was never without this sense; it is one of the fundamental causes of his isolation. Brandes wrote:

"Ibsen, I may safely assert, is inclined to believe that he has received his endowments at a time when there were very few with whom to divide the sum. He has, therefore, no consciousness of being the child of a people, a part of the whole, the leader of a group, a member of society; he feels himself exclusively a gifted individual, and the sole object in which he

believes, and for which he cherishes respect, is personality."

In the execution of his drama Ibsen's solicitude appears to have been threefold. There was the unerring interest in character; there was the personal reflection of his own spiritual attitude; and, finally, there was his growing sense of the national requirements. As we have said, the last two acts of "The Pretenders" are an amplification of the struggle aggravated by Bishop Nicholas. The gradual undermining of Skule's will, after success has attended his military movements against the King, is analyzed with much cleverness by Ibsen. No one is fit to hold the sceptre who wavers, who possesses the moral doubt that one man may take "God's calling from another, as he takes weapons and gold from his fallen foe!" "Can a Pretender clothe himself in a King's life-task, as he can put on the kingly mantle?" There must be conviction bred in the bone. Even in his converse with Jatgeir, the skald, King Skule recognises his weakness; he hears that in life one should either be strong in his belief or possess the strength of doubt—but he who doubts his doubt might as well be dead.

In other words, Skule is barren of all that which combines to make a ruler; had he a son who wholly trusted him, then might his faith be great indeed. He never once realizes the import of Jatgeir's admonition to trust in himself, since he is the only one to save himself. When, finally, Peter, his ill-begotten son, commits sin for the sake of the faith he has in his father, the wavering of Skule gains full sway; the return of the ghost of Nicholas, reminding one of the externalizing of Hamlet's mental state, on one hand, and of

Peer's encounter with the Button-Moulder on the other, awakens him to an understanding of the evil workings of the Bishop's mind. Yet, in another instance does Ibsen put into the latter's mouth the utterance of his own outlook upon national conditions —making all the more poignant his contempt for the irresolution of the Norwegian people. What says the ghost of Nicholas—a veritable emissary from the realm of darkness?

"In Norway my Empire forever is founded,
Though it be to my subjects a riddle unsounded.
While to their life-work Norsemen set out
Will-lessly wavering, daunted with doubt,
While hearts are shrunken, minds helplessly shivering,
Weak as a willow-wand wind-swept and quivering,—
While about one thing alone they're united,
Namely, that greatness be stoned and despited,—
When they seek honour in fleeing and falling
Under the banner of baseness unfurled,—
Then Bishop Nicholas 'tends to his calling,
The Bagler-Bishop's at work in the world!"

The characters of Peer Gynt and King Skule have much in common, especially in their mutual desire to leave ways open for retreat. They face defeat in the same way, returning to a full comprehension of what they have missed in the sacrifice of love. Broken in mind and in body, Skule seeks the convent where his wife, his daughter, and his sister abide his coming; "I sought after happiness abroad," so he cried, "and heeded not the home wherein I might have found it."

Thus, shorn of his ambition, divesting himself of the grip of Nicholas's influence, he would atone by ridding King Håkon of his own presence—for the rightful King had sworn to bring Skule to his death,

telling Margrete so with some of the stoical cruelty of Brand's conversations with Agnes. By this act of Håkon's an estrangement would have been wrought between Margrete and himself. King Skule has this in mind when he and Peter, his son, pass through the convent gates, outside of which they meet death at the hands of the people who are enraged by Peter's desecration of Olaf's shrine.

Throughout "The Pretenders" we note variations of themes which Ibsen had either made use of before or was evolving for future dramas. It is surprising to mark the innumerable suggestions for "Brand" and for "Peer Gynt" found in the last two acts of this play; in matter of versification, of actual wording, of character portrayal, it becomes surprisingly evident. Herein the full force of the romantic influence is for the last time felt; Bishop Nicholas might have been cast in the mould of Victor Hugo or of Dumas; Ibsen makes no further use of the romantic type of his proportion. As an indication of Ibsen's proneness to repetition of idea, Gunnar, in "The Vikings at Helgeland," takes unto himself the glory of an achievement which belonged to another; here Skule appropriates a thought which originated in Håkon's mind. Later on the Mayor, in "Brand," steals the priest's idea of building the larger church. This persistence in motive is also evident in the scene where Ingeborg, Skule's mistress, speaks:[1] "To love, to sacrifice all and be forgotten, that is my saga." She is content with this task which she interprets as the woman's duty, nay, more, as her own happiness. Despite the wrong done by Skule, Ingeborg is prompted by the idea—one

[1] See Brandes's "Ibsen," p. 29.

which shows Ibsen's continued attitude toward the woman question—that it is man's right, as well as his privilege, to forget. This quiescence on her part is characteristic of Agnes and Solveig.

Skule is at first the political weakling going around and never facing an issue, never being wholly anything. This is where he resembles in general idea the portraiture of Peer; but where he differs is in his solidity of character, his seriousness. Later, despite the fact that within his soul he cannot dispel doubt, Skule is turned into a political fanatic, and when Håkon confronts him with the proposal to share the kingdom—a proposal which he finally makes himself to the King, only to be refused—he utters the very intention of Brand—the demand of "All or Naught."

These are but a few of the analogies in which the play abounds. One or two incomparably tender scenes centring around Margrete are indicative of the poet in Ibsen—flashes of that exquisite sentiment which later he tried almost religiously to stifle. In the occasional versification through the last act, noticeably in the scene with the Bishop's ghost, there is the inconsequent ring of "Peer Gynt." In fact, "The Pretenders" typifies the very highest attainment of the historical period on the one hand, and on the other forebodes the dexterity of the satiric dramas.[1]

Nothing is more significant than the deepening of Ibsen's art ideas; they did not broaden, but glowed inwardly, and thus, while putting on fuller meaning,

[1] Regarding the psychology of "The Pretenders," Boyesen suggests that a comparison be made with Schiller's "Wallenstein."

were virtually the same throughout the plays. His development from the romanticist to the realist, and thence to the symbolist was simply the acquirement of three habits of mind in reference to the same facts of life. "The Pretenders," however, exhibits a new acquisition on the part of Ibsen—an acquisition which carries the play far above "The Vikings at Helgeland" in point of vitality. Once wholly absorbed in history—partly showing thereby his devotion to Oehlenschläger—Ibsen now stands forth as a psychologist, who is intent on understanding the individual and the individual's moral relation with the facts of life. As Brandes avers, his interest in the inward struggle of Håkon and Skule was much more absorbing to him than the literal occurrences of history. Still, because of this very use of the historical, Ibsen felt himself constrained to adopt a technique which would harmonize with the material. We see him, however, breaking from his worn-out modèls—restive in the handling of the data which he had drawn from the past. For "The Pretenders," even though of the thirteenth century, in general colour, is modern in its intellectual attitude.

The political tendency in the play exalts the doctrine of unification of Scandinavia as one people. Beginning with the zeal of a nationalist, as soon as he was enabled to view the situation from a distance, Ibsen became imbued with the consuming desire of bringing about this larger state of things. As we shall see, during his residence in Italy and Germany, he was persistently preaching his doctrine, having more faith in the welding together of folks with varying prejudices, than the actual conditions would

warrant. Brandes' penetrating discernment saw these frailties in Ibsen; defects in his intellectual training due in part to a lack of definite restraint attendant upon his defective, or rather, incomplete, education.

The sum total of the opinion written about "The Pretenders" has the predominating tone of unusual praise. Ibsen was for a long time maturing in his stagecraft, and in respect to this, "The Vikings at Helgeland" is probably more close in its external treatment, though lacking in its spiritual weight. "The Pretenders" is a tragedy of great beauty, in which the interest in character is more universal than it is Norwegian, for the actual local, political, or historical worth is slight in comparison with the broad human significance. In workmanship, in conception, it denotes a surety of power which continues and is sustained throughout the piece, despite the artificial effect of the final acts.

The first edition[1] of "The Pretenders," issued by Johan Dahl in October, 1863, contained a musical setting to Margrete's Cradle Song, composed by Fru Emma Dahl; in November, 1870, the second edition was brought out in Copenhagen. The piece met with much favour, as was shown in a letter written by Ibsen to Gosse from Dresden, on October 14, 1872. The English critic had made a statement in the

[1] Separate editions of "The Pretenders" were issued in 1870, 1872, 1875, 1879, 1883, 1889, 1894, 1898. A French translation was made by Jacques Trigant-Geneste in 1893; a German translation by Adolf Strodtmann, 1872. See Halvorsen. Also see Ibsen's "Correspondence (25)" giving John Grieg, brother of Edvard, permission to translate "The Pretenders."

London *Academy* that A. Munch's drama on "Duke Skule" by a curious coincidence appeared about the same time as "The Pretenders." As a matter of fact, annoyed as he always was by any suggestion of literary similarity, Ibsen hastened to let Gosse understand that Munch's play appeared at a slightly later date, and added with some show of pride: "'The Pretenders' has all along enjoyed, both on the stage, and with the reading public, a far greater measure of favour than 'Duke Skule.'"[1] This he does confess to Hansen, however, which not only excuses his begrudging Björnson his fortunate circumstances, but likewise emphasizes the penalty one has to pay for longing to gain complete emancipation, which prompted his poem "On the Heights," or for wishing to better society, which resulted in "Love's Comedy": "The fact that all were against me—that there was no longer any one outside of my family circle of whom I could say: 'he believes in me'—must, as you can easily see, have aroused a mood which found its outlet in 'The Pretenders.'"

In 1870, Ibsen revised "The Pretenders" for Hegel, and while so doing he showed his evident satisfaction over the early construction of the piece. His zeal for the triple coalition in Scandinavia was carried to the extent of adhering in his proof to the orthographical decisions which were tending to

[1] The reader is referred to the first volume of Ibsen's "Sämtliche Werke" (ed. Brandes, Elias, and Schlenther) for the following poems: "König Håkons Festhalle," p. 2; "Ornulfs Drapa," p. 57. Halvorsen refers to the following German criticisms: Ad. von Hanstein: "Ibsen als Idealist" (Lpz., 1897); *Morgenbladet*, 1864. No. 13, 20, 23—M. J. Monrad.

unify the Scandinavian languages. By 1870, when he was in correspondence with Hegel, the rupture between Björnson and himself had existed for some years. The fact is, Ibsen was beginning not only to wish for a reconciliation but also to feel around for some means of bringing this about. The discussion of a second edition of "The Pretenders" opened a way, but it was almost immediately closed. Ibsen, throughout his life, was a keen business man; unsparing in his expenditure of money on his son, Sigurd, yet in other particulars he was known to stint in such manner as only a miser could. No sooner did he grow into a man of affairs, than he watched every opportunity to make his investments work for him. He might have dedicated the new edition of "The Pretenders" to Björnson had not the latter's political behaviour, according to Ibsen's views, been detrimental to the welfare of Norway. In that country, it is true, the acceptance of literature was partly dependent upon one's political convictions, and a certain part of the book-buying public might have refrained from purchasing any volume which had Björnson's name inscribed on the dedicatory page. This hesitation may have been solicitude on the part of Ibsen for Hegel's interest, but it was also a little shrewdness displayed on his own behalf. [1]

[1] The performances of "The Pretenders" may be noted as follows: Christiania Theatre, January 17, 1864; Copenhagen, January 11, 1871; Hof Theatre, Meiningen, 1875; Berlin, June, 1876; Munich, 1875; Hof Theatre, Schwerin, November 15, 1875; Stockholm, January 19, 1879, etc. See Halvorsen. In America the first performance of "The Pretenders" was given by students of Yale University, organized as "The Yale University Dramatic Association" (1907). The text was judi-

CHAPTER IX

THE HISTORY OF BRAND [1]

IBSEN left Norway in a mood which might well be described by a passage in Kierkegaard's "Either—Or": "Let others complain of this age as being wicked. I complain of it as being contemptible, for it is devoid of passion. Men's thoughts are thin and frail as lace, they themselves are the weakling lace-workers. The thoughts of their hearts are too paltry to be sinful." Ibsen's indignation had found expression before in his dramas; but now he was to test it by long distance view. Strange to say the

ciously cut, and was published under the supervision of Dwight Raymond Meigs. The volume contains an introduction by William Lyon Phelps, Professor of English Literature at Yale University. The spirit of the whole play, as given by the company, was admirably conceived. This was not so in the case of the performance given at Smith College on June 12, 1908. Through the solicitude of the faculty the young ladies cut the text so as to improve the "moral tone" of the theme, especially in the instance of Ingeborg and the illegitimate Peter.

[1] At the very outset I wish to express my indebtedness to Mr. Julius E. Olson, Professor of the Scandinavian Languages and Literature in the University of Wisconsin, who, in the midst of preparing his definitive and annotated "Brand: Et Dramatisk Digt," was courteous enough to send me the proofs of his introduction and notes. The book is to be issued during 1908 by the John Anderson Publishing Co., and will contain in the appendix "Till de Medskyldige!" besides a select bibliography referring to "Brand." In his work as editor and commentator, Professor Olson's illuminating viewpoint will do much to give the English reader an insight into Ibsen's orthographical artistry, as well as a clearer understanding of the poem's significance. As the first of Ibsen's dramas to be edited critically for the English student, Professor Olson's book should be welcomed.

result was to make of him a better Norwegian than he had ever been at close range.

Many months passed before he could concentrate his attention upon work. Political events were occurring only to verify his own belief in the weakness of the state and in the lack of ideal energy in the Norwegian people. For the second Danish war had already begun and the Scandinavian unity of which he had hoped was proving a futile thing. Denmark was struggling in Holstein, unaided by Norway; and Ibsen was pouring forth his sympathy for the sorely stricken nation, sounding the alarm at the quiescence of his countrymen. His verses to "A Brother in Distress (December, 1863)" pulse with the shame over the broken faith, the forgotten pledges made to Denmark; he found that the words vainly spoken meant nothing without the intent, the will to do, behind them. The betrayal of Judas was naught beside the inaction of Norway. Had the people forgotten that a brother was in danger, or were they cowards, all of them?

This intense feeling increased when Ibsen reached the actual scenes of war. On his way to Rome he passed through Copenhagen, leaving his son and wife in that city until the following October. He then proceeded to Berlin where the people were celebrating the recent victory over the Danes at Dybböl,[1] shouting around the gun carriages, even spitting into "the cannon that received no help and yet went on shooting until they burst." Such ignominy Ibsen could not stand. "If I had stayed longer in Berlin,"

[1] See Wilhelm Muller's "Political History of Recent Times (1816-1875)." Harper. 1882.

he wrote in retrospect to Björnson, "I do not know how much of my reason I should have retained." The sudden transition he experienced when he reached Rome, where "there is a blessed peace for writing," was to force him into a consideration of new elements and for the moment was to engross his attention in a civilization far removed from that of the North, and in responding to which he was to reveal his own national limitations.

He had left Copenhagen on borrowed money, as a letter to his barrister friend Bernhard Dunker will show:[1] and in addition, the warmhearted Björnson had obtained many private donations for him. Not only was he thus behind the endeavour to let his brother-worker escape for a while the narrowness of Norwegian life, having himself enjoyed a long stay abroad, but he was also in a large manner responsible for the bettering of Ibsen's condition in the years to come, through the introduction given to Frederick Hegel, head of the famous Copenhagen Gyldendalske Boghandel. It was after the publication of "Peer Gynt" that the estrangement between Björnson and Ibsen was to take place.

When the poet's family joined him in October, 1864, he was struggling to adjust himself to a change in scene; he was also revealing to Björnson through correspondence that there was within him something which would not allow him to cut aloof from his native land. He was torn between antique expression, on the one hand, and the immediate condition of affairs on the other. On his part, he was showing Björnson how sincere and open he wished to be in

[1] He also accepted aid from Sverdrup, the liberal leader.

all of his transactions—an openness which immediately set matters right when it was a question whether the Christiania Theatre would elect Björnson to the post of director, even though the committee could not approve of his insistence upon a free, untrammelled regulation of affairs, or whether they would try to force Ibsen back—an openness, furthermore, which dispelled any suspicion Björnson may have had that Ibsen would accept the appointment. This suspicion, as Ibsen confessed, was partly his own fault. "I know it to be a defect in me," so he wrote, "that I am incapable of entering into close and intimate relations with people who demand that one should yield one's self up entirely and unreservedly. I have something of the same feeling as the Skald in 'The Pretenders'; I can never bear to strip myself completely." This is the attitude he assumed on nearly all occasions; if he was silent it was because of an inability to give proper expression to his inner self. Ibsen's friends had to make many allowances for these pronounced shortcomings.

The little family that moved into lodgings at the corner of Due Macelli and Via Capo le Case possessed scant means of livelihood—not more than forty scudi (£8 10s.) a month. With wonderful tact—for Ibsen was a difficult person to deal with in delicate matters—Björnson came to the rescue again and practically served as his banker, sending him monthly allowances which were received with a sense of gratitude as well as with a naïve belief that he was justified, by reason of his mission, in accepting this assistance from others.

In his surroundings he was trying to connect an

ancient art with his own time; he was not carried away æsthetically; to him, Keats's "thing of beauty" was not "a joy forever," unless he could read into it a broad significance other than that which its own age gave it. He could not arrive at any relation between this past art and the present. But despite the strangeness he felt, he had begun to write a tragedy, "Julianus Apostata," as well as a long poem, based on this past civilization.

Two letters, written to Björnson, indicate this fermentation within him—this opposing of the ancient and the modern spirit. But in the midst of his trying to reconcile the two elements there would loom up before him the awful lies, the idle dreams surrounding the life at home.[1] From his many remarks, one cannot feel that either Rome or Greece had much effect upon the character of Ibsen's work, except, as he acknowledged, to drive out from him a narrow æstheticism, which in its isolation is "as great a curse to poetry as theology is to religion." He may have come to understand antique sculpture, but Italy never gave him the artistic impulse that it gave to Byron, to Shelley, to Keats, or to Browning; it simply afforded him an opportunity of gaining some rest and of gathering his strength instead of disseminating it at the slightest local provocation.

There is something peculiarly rare about the character of Henrik Ibsen—a simplicity which demands sympathy at unexpected moments and in the midst of harsh, cold situations; he possessed many of the qualities exhibited by Brand on his march to destruction. He gives a picture of himself, dreaming by the

[1] See Correspondence, Letters 17, 18.

half day on the Via Latina and the Appian Way; we hear his exclamation over the "indescribable harmony" of scenery. He remained hopeful, energetic, in the darkest pecuniary storms; he felt that in his work he could not fail, though, despite his happiness, despite the natural beauty of his surroundings, he instinctively felt that whatever writing he would do "will be rather sombrely coloured."

The fact is that Ibsen's Scandinavianism consumed him, and drew him as one of the moving spirits, into the little coterie established at Rome; he was even hoping—a hope not fulfilled because of better times ahead—to succeed Lorentz Dietrichson as librarian of the Scandinavian Society, which he used to frequent, sitting there by the hour, emitting terse opinions and gruff remarks about pictures. Here he first became acquainted with his life-long friend, Count Carl Snoilsky, the Swedish poet.

Clad in a velveteen jacket, which had seen better days, with his hands thrust far into his pockets, silent, taciturn, or suddenly fulminating some generalization regarding the State and the larger idea of the Nation—this picture of Ibsen at thirty-seven is not so different from the others we have at later periods of his career.[1] The outer crust became more accentuated as the inner spirit became deeper. Now, as hereafter, he drank his light wine, he read his newspaper, "self-sufficient and self-contained," to quote Gosse, meanwhile criticising Norway yet boasting of the indestructibility of the Scandinavian temperament, even though the states should crumble into oblivion. Though the outward facts were diffi-

[1] See the recollections of Christian Molbech, quoted by Gosse.

cult to reconcile with his opinions, still the Ibsen of this period was firm in his belief that the "national spirit has life enough to thrive in and on misfortune."

This broad conception of the state versus the nation will be considered in a later summary; it will enter into the satiric discussions in "Brand"; here it is only necessary to note that events were pushing within Ibsen the formulation of definite political conceptions; his were not the incendiary outbursts of a fanatic; they were not the iconoclastic views of a destructive anarch; he was trying to construct a state of things that would correspond with his broadest ideals.

Notwithstanding the pecuniary pressure which always stared him in the face, Ibsen managed to make short excursions, now to Genzano or Albano, and again planning a trip to the Sabine Hills. His work upon the Emperor Julian tragedy had likewise taken sufficient shape to warrant his basing an appeal to the Royal Norwegian Scientific Society in Trondhjem for £90, not only to afford him an opportunity of travelling but to relieve him of some of the strain of daily life in Rome. The petition, dated March 25, 1865, was presented through Björnson, but failed, despite the latter's solicitous endeavours to bring about results; then largely upon his own initiative, Björnson made a second application with the result that in August, £22 10s. (100 specie-dollars) was awarded, with the idea that it would assist Ibsen in completing his drama based on Roman history. 1873 was to arrive before the poet could make to the Society any report upon his play.

This lapse was due to one of those vagaries of

genius which often turn the tide into unexpected channels. Ibsen had never, thus far in his stay at Rome, been wholly engrossed in his composition; he was feeling his way, working on ideas which did not quite fit in with his mood but which had to wait for the voice within him to bid him go. When the demand fell upon him, it was of another character; the scales dropped from his eyes; he saw what his mood needed; he instinctively grasped the secret that his mental vision, his physical energy was seeking an outlet for Norse expression, not for the appreciation of Roman antiquity. He had been vainly endeavouring in a long poem which Professor Olson adds in part as an Appendix [1] to his edition of "Brand," to give his expression to views which had for so many months weighed heavily upon him; now, suddenly, while strolling within the shadow of St. Peter's, he saw the form he had been waiting for. With all the force of his being he set himself to the task, and as the conception grew, he felt his grasp becoming firmer, he recognised that if the poem did naught else than steady his own soul, it would be serving a great purpose. With the relief which follows the lifting of a mood which he described as having weighed on him for more than a year, Ibsen became absorbed in his composition.[2] It mattered little whether or not it was hot July, he plied his pen morning and afternoon, prompted by a power which he had never before experienced. He seemed to have come into a full reali-

[1] See Olson. Introduction, note, p. 38.

[2] The reader is advised to read Chap. VI of Rudolph Lothar's "Henrik Ibsen." It contains some vital colour, besides being illustrated with portraits.

zation of his expression, which had heretofore been restricted. He had moved to Ariccia, a small village, eighteen miles from Rome, in a southeasterly direction. The light of God had descended upon him while he was in the city doing errands, mayhap in a garb which won him a particular name from the Italian peasants. They could always recognise "Il cappellone" on the road-way by his big hat with the broad brim lined in sky blue—the Blue Grotto as it was called by his friends.

Although living in the midst of great wealth of natural surroundings, it is strange to find Ibsen conjuring up the most austere of Norwegian scenery for his new poem. Luxuriance and brightness had greeted him along the road from Trieste to Rome and the soft Italian atmosphere had bathed him in languorous fashion, but still his imagination played upon fjord and mountain fastness. Jæger, and all critics after him, have remarked on Ibsen's peculiar attitude in respect to the sombre aspects of nature; he was perhaps the first poet of Norway to fail to emphasize the brighter phase; some flash of sunlight, some beneficent sign, whether from stream or forest or bird, gleamed in the lilt of other poets' song. Björnson tried to express some rebound of heart in "Synnöve Solbakken"; if to him the surroundings became oppressive, then he would hie him in thought to places better fitted to youth, where apple trees and the breath of summer add gaiety to the view, where the outlook is not confined by infinite barriers which keep the sun away. The desire to break from the sombreness of earth and sky permeates such a lyric as Björnson's "Over the Lofty Mountains," found in

"Arne." But Ibsen's regard was always tempered by sadness; note the melancholy of "In the Autumn,"[1] and the shadows running through the verses "In the Mountains."[2] The persistency of this brooding is indicative of Ibsen's temperament.

Ariccia and the luxuriance of Italy therefore faded before the memory of his tramp during the summer of 1862 through the Jötunheim mountains in his search for ballads. The home which Agnes and Brand call the parsonage in Act III was such an one as he found during his tour. Agnes says:

> "So prone
> Beetles yon jutting mountain-wall,
> That, when the leafy spring is near,
> The brimming avalanche vaults sheer
> Over our heads, and we lie clear
> As in the hollow of a fall."

Indeed, just such a situation had confronted Ibsen at Hellesylt in Sundelven, and, when he there visited the pastor's wife, he found her holding the same confident ideas that he afterwards assigned to Agnes regarding the safety of her home. In general, Ibsen's types of ideal women were always similar, though usually modelled each upon some person he had met; he was, as all dramatists are, keenly alert to store up experiences and traits for eventual service. He did not allow his reality of Agnes to simmer as long in memory as he did his prototype of Hilda Wangel; for during his sojourn in Genzano, in 1864, he met, according to Paulsen, a widow, Fru Lina Brunn, and her daughter Thea, the latter being a

[1] See German edition, p. 193.
[2] See French edition, p. 143.

sensitive, self-sacrificing person who eventually died as a result of nervous strain attendant upon the death of her brothers. There is no direct acknowledgment from Ibsen that this girl influenced him in his conception of Agnes, though he was always interested in the Brunn family; and, during 1902, Mr. Olson visited the brother and was shown a marble bust of Thea, whom everyone regarded as the original Agnes.[1]

The form of "Brand" seemed to spring into being instantly; little else was thought of, even in spare moments; at such times, Ibsen sedulously omitted outside reading, a habit always resorted to in his periods of composition. What he did, however, was to devote himself to the Bible in spare hours, drawing from it some of its vigour and spiritual uplift. He found himself relieved of the necessity of seeing callers, since he and his family were strangers in the vicinity of Ariccia. There were two moods at work in the Ibsen of this time [2]—one which, as he confessed to Björnson, made him feel exalted like the Crusaders of old, confident of ultimate victory; the other which delighted in watching the movements of a scorpion placed in a glass on his desk, a vicious animal that used to vent his poison into a piece of fruit, thereby becoming mollified. "Does not something of the kind happen to us poets?" asked Ibsen in a letter. "The laws of nature regulate the spiritual world also."

He was not aiming to write a peaceful drama. There was something of the belligerent in him all

[1] See Olson's "Brand," p. 41.

[2] See Correspondence, Letters 20, 24, 74.

through, and he knew well that others would probably resent his innuendoes. If the members of the Storthing had heretofore regarded him with ill-favour, "Brand" would in no way improve their opinion of him. He was harassed with worldly vexation, but on no consideration would he modify his opinions for personal gain—therein lay the moral value of his fight to overcome the lie. And so, to Björnson, he exclaims: "Hang me if I can or will, on that account, suppress a single line, no matter what these 'pocket-edition' souls think of it!"

In the fall of 1865, Ibsen had, as we have said, been introduced to Frederick Hegel, and in November of that year the latter proposed to bring out "Brand." In one respect, Ibsen was not only flattered, but encouraged by the proposal; yet, notwithstanding, he was annoyed that Norway was apparently willing to have her authors seek publishers abroad, a custom which would eventually redound to her shame.[1] On November 15th the last pages of manuscript left Ibsen's hands, and on the 15th of March, 1866, the book appeared in Copenhagen.

Immediately upon completion of the almost inspired task, a tide of thankfulness swept over Ibsen; more than ever was he conscious of his divine mission to awaken his brethren in Norway—a life-task, he called it, in which he must force the regard of men upon the great questions of life; he looked upon Hegel as a vital point in this work; in a sense he regarded himself as a national representative, willing to do atonement for Norway's and Sweden's crime in re-

[1] See particularly Correspondence, 118. To Johan Vibe, Dresden. March 3, 1875.

spect to Denmark. But there likewise came over him the absolutely lost feeling that the removal or completion of a piece of work usually creates. He had time on his hands to ponder over his worldly possessions, which seemed never so slim as at this moment when he was on the threshold of widespread recognition. For a while he was to utter some heart-rending appeals, revealing in stark and naked distinctness his aloofness of body and spirit. "Dear Björnson," he writes, "it seems to me as if I were separated from both God and men by a great, an infinite void."

Yet, always he was the Scandinavian dwelling in Italy; he spoke of the Scandinavian Club as "our" society; he, with the others, delighted in listening evening after evening to Nordraak's musical setting for Björnson's "Sigurd Slembe." He found apparent pleasure in meeting his countrymen, although, to judge by a letter to his mother-in-law, Magdalene Thoresen,[1] Ibsen was thoroughly disappointed over the spiritual depravity among them. In the very temper of Brand, he uttered his diatribes against the lukewarmness among Norwegians which lurked behind the mistaken reputation they had gained for national discretion. At this time he was very solicitous about making sure of the few friends around him; a slight misunderstanding as to money matters with Björnson tortured him at the same time that it raised his ire, since outside persons had ques-

[1] Fru Thoresen had herself issued about this time "The Story of Signe" (1864) which Ibsen called "that most beautiful work." It dealt with Norwegian peasant life. The year previous, Ibsen had printed a short account of Fru Thoresen's *tales.* See German edition, p. 496.

tioned his honesty. "Such words," he wrote in some heat, "must not be written about me. The man who said them to me, I would kill on the spot." There is a premonition of an eventual break with Björnson in this letter of March 4, 1866.

"Brand" is the poem of Ibsen's which first won him international reputation. The fourth edition[1] appeared on December 14, 1866, only four months having elapsed since the third. The Scandinavian world seemed to be overpowered by its significance and were eager, so good authority has it, to read the book because of its *priest* hero. But Ibsen would not countenance this reason for interest in his poem—there was a deeper purpose in it than that which was symbolized in Brand's holy costume. He felt that his work was being admired rather than being understood, and he never could abide adulation of any kind, however much he might have a sneaking liking for personal honours.

Ibsen's estimate as sent to Brandes on June 26, 1869, must not be wholly accepted; he assuredly had some design, some intention, conscious or otherwise,

[1] According to Halvorsen, note the following concerning "Brand": 2nd. ed., Kbhvn, [24 May] 1866; 3rd. ed., Kbhvn, [16 Aug.] 1866; 4th ed., Kbhvn, [14 Dec.] 1866; 5th ed., Kbhvn, [1 Oct.] 1868; 6th ed., Kbhvn, [21 Sept.] 1871; 7th ed., Kbhvn, [16 April] 1874; 8th ed., Kbhvn, [21 Dec.] 1876; 9th ed., Kbhvn, [30 June] 1881; 10th ed., Kbhvn, [23 April] 1885; 11th ed., Kbhvn, [6 June] 1889; 12th ed., [8 Sept.] 1892; 13th ed., Kbhvn, [4 Sept.] 1895; 14th ed., [1 Dec.] 1898. Gosse states, however, that the proceeds from the first four editions amounted to little over £100, Ibsen, in the meanwhile, being forced to borrow from the Danish Consul in Rome. In a letter dated Frascati, July 22, 1866, Ibsen said that he had saved the manuscript of "Brand" for Botten-Hansen.

in making Brand a priest and thereby in making the problem concerned with religious topics. He said:

"I could have constructed the same syllogism just as easily on the subject of a sculptor, or a politician, as of a priest.[1] I could have found an equally satisfactory vent for the mood which impelled me to create, if, instead of Brand, I had written, say, of Galileo—making him, of course, hold his ground, and not admit that the earth stands still. Indeed, who knows but that I might, had I been born a hundred years later, have dealt just as well with you and your battle with Rasmus Nielsen's philosophy."

Assuredly, as Ibsen insists, this drama contained a deal of masked objectivity, which, when Dr. Brandes came to estimate it, the Danish critic failed to recognise; there is in it a reminiscence of Pastor Gustave Adolphe Lammers, who dwelt in the parish of Skien until his troubled and rebellious mind forced him to give up his flock and seek broader fields. The established church no longer satisfied the pastor; he founded a "Free Apostolic-Christian Communion," and, as would be natural in a conservative community, he won many enemies and scorners, but he also gained some disciples. Through his severe dictates, he shook Norwegian religious conscience as it had never been shaken before. For he was keen to make large demands upon the spiritual side of persons, and held punishment in store for all who fell short of his principles.

In Lammers' final sermon,[2] as outlined by Jæger,

[1] See Correspondence, Letter 59.

[2] Jæger analyzes the sermon, and refers to Lammers' published work, Skien, 1856. See H. Woerner, "Henrik Ibsen," I,

delivered immediately before he gave up his evangelical work and his crusade against the Norwegian church as it then existed, he was as bitter against officialdom in religious matters as Ibsen was against the same officialdom in affairs of state; his desire was to bring the sacrament back to its heights of attainment, casting off the undeserving from partaking in this holiest of functions. He was iconoclastic as respects infant baptism; he pointed a finger of scorn at the marriage service and the burial service as then governed by petty social restrictions; he was against all semblances. Had he not even gone so far as to call churches comedy-houses?

We must, therefore, in arriving at some understanding of "Brand," bear in mind the ascetic Lammers, whose severity was preached among a people whom he took, even as Brand took his, to the mountain-side for divine service. Ibsen resented the supposition that he drew his philosophy from Kierkegaard; he would rather acknowledge Lammers, though he was loath to be beholden to either. Even in those unconscious subtle influences which affect thought, Ibsen wished to cut himself aloof. A man cannot pick and choose the elements which enter into his composition. Ibsen would have Brand naught but a human being—it matters not whether his vocation be in the realm of art or religion—but essential it was that the type make the demand of "All or Nothing"; inasmuch as Brand makes this demand, inasmuch as any one determined to reach the accomplishment of ideals, must fight for them in this way,

177, where this sermon of farewell is discussed. Edouard Rod accepts the Lammers theory as well as the Kierkegaard theory.

such a hero cannot help but bear a certain likeness to this Danish thinker of the first half of the nineteenth century.[1] The difference between these two prototypes of Brand was largely a matter of external estimate on the part of Ibsen; Lammers was not a closet philosopher, whereas Kierkegaard was, and, therefore, should people absolutely need to have a model for Brand, they had best take the former.

Ibsen was always zealous in his desire to connect his efforts ultimately with himself; he believed confidently that a thorough, systematic self-analysis would bring to light all the necessary stuff out of which the characters of Brand and Peer Gynt and Stensgård were evolved. "Brand is myself in my best moments," he wrote with some show of pride.

In the firm belief that English readers should know something of Kierkegaard and his philosophy, M. A. Stobart[2] considers a few points which to him appear to bear directly upon "Brand." The latter's philosophy, admitting of no concessions to human weakness, so runs the argument, is not palliative in its influence nor external in its accomplishment. According to Stobart, Ibsen veiled under Brand's striving, the fundamental principle in the belief of Kierkegaard.

This Danish philosopher, this upholder of the full-blooded will, believed that in life necessity demanded

[1] Ibsen wrote to Hansen, in 1870, that he had "read very little of Sören Kierkegaard and understood even less," an irritated outburst which was perhaps later modified. See *Revue de Paris*, July, 1901.

[2] See M. A. Stobart's "New Light on Ibsen's 'Brand.'" *Fortnightly*, August 1, 1899, 72: 227-239. Kierkegaard (1813-1855). See Brandes on Kierkegaard.

the sacrifice of all "earthly encumbrances." Therefore in "the crucifixion of the human element lies man's sole chance of ultimate reconciliation and union with God." Will-power and not lip service will do away with the rottenness of Christianity. Now Kierkegaard and Brand, according to Stobart, agree on three cardinal points: first, that the specious conception of God has ruined Christianity; second, that from this it must be seen that religious truth is only to be found in subjective force (will-power); and finally, that in the "willing sacrifice of 'All or Nothing' lies salvation."

This is indeed very much the picture of Brand, but Stobart advances further, encouraged by the philosophy of Kierkegaard: the latter's consideration of human action was always viewed from the æsthetic, ethical and religious standpoints. In terms, therefore, of this philosopher, since Brand is a species of self-appointed Redeemer, his ethical responsibility for the deaths of his mother, his child and his wife dwindles before the "inheritance-debt," "guilt predetermined by the necessities of Destiny." Therefore, Ibsen's superlative treatment makes of Brand's action not a crime, but something of a glorified obligation or responsibility. For, writes Stobart, "As the gods required the life of Antigone in final expiation of the crimes of Œdipus, so did the God of Brand require, in atonement for the sins of his forefathers, the utmost treasures his Will could sacrifice."

After all, in our eager search for the source of inspiration in "Brand," it is well to remember, however strong the claims of Lammers and Kierkegaard, that so general in one respect is the philosophy of

save his own neck rather than his own soul and the souls of others.

On the road, emerging into sunlight, he meets with Einar and Agnes, who come toward him, singing with all the romanticism of their love. Theirs is the mistaken gilded dream of "Love's Comedy," a taste of abandonment; in contrast with Brand's stern scrutiny, and his puritanical demands, their union thus far would seem to be almost the wild example of free love. Einar soon discovers in Brand an old schoolmate, and in the boyhood recollections that follow there are evident flashes of Ibsen's own youth and of his customary habit of holding nature accountable for his austerity of mood.

Though Brand returns home, his path, so it appears to him, lies beyond the narrow village of his boyhood; he is a mission priest, as Lammers was at Skien; mayhap he and Einar and Agnes will sail away together. How different, though, their goals—these lightsome spirits bound to the semblance of Love, Brand intent on burying the God who is the generally accepted God of the miserably weak world. In his speeches, showing the canker at the heart of Christianity as well as of himself, we realize Ibsen's mind to be partly engrossed with the subject of the Emperor Julian; his religious doubt is the reflection of doubt in the Apostate. His speech seems to Einar as heretical as Lammers' piety and his demands seemed to the worthies of Skien;[1] Brand turns upon him, noting in his waywardness the tendency of an entire nation. "Be what you are with all your heart,

[1] ...son says that in Kielland's novel, "Skipper Worse," the ...al movement in Norway receives adequate treatment.

and not by pieces and in part," he thunders, forestalling Peer Gynt,[1] in his picture of the fragmentary life, each part serving to vitiate the rest. Brand will have naught to do with Einar's conventional God, the picture of an old patriarch dealing out bliss; he would face the storm where the God of his own conception is young, where there is no creed, but where Everlasting Right is immutable. From the scraps of spiritual life, especially evident in Norway, he would build a *whole* man. This is a world task, only once before attempted in the expiation of Christ for the sins of the world. And so, when Brand leaves Einar and Agnes, he has left the former untouched, but to the girl he has appeared in large proportions; her change in soul somehow deepens her understanding; the roseate universe of a few seconds before has ceased to be so warm and bright.

When Brand reaches the crags overlooking the dull sleepiness of his former home, he feels settling upon him the restraining grip of a stagnant community. The farm, the sheds, the cliffs, all characteristic of the mountains, arise as the reality of an early nightmare. Here he will find sluggard spirits content with nothing more than prayer and daily bread, daily bread and prayer. In this mood he meets with Gerd, the externalizing of his worst moments, even as Pippa in Browning's poem represents the redeeming influence among those with whom she comes in contact, however indirectly. Gerd is chasing a falcon, which stands in peculiar relation to Brand, as does also her Ice-Church among the snows.

[1] See "Peer Gynt," Act v, Sc. vi, in which Peer is confronted by the Thread-balls, etc.

The church in the valley is foul, that on the cold heights is dangerous, far up yonder where the Mass is sung to the roar of the cataract. Brand recognises in Gerd a certain irresistible evil, but it is more to be hoped that evil may be changed into good than that Einar's dulness can ever be conquered. After the girl dashes off, Brand muses and frames his call; he talks in allegory, though burning with the engrossing enthusiasm which always seized Ibsen when he contemplated his life work. It is a large task to make the sick earth whole again!

Thus, all the motives of the play are stowed away in this first act, the gathering chords of the tragedy. Brand now enters the little fjord-side village, where there is a famine and where a Mayor and his clerk are dealing out scant provisions to the starving crowd; officialdom receives its first rap in this provincial group. The starving are numbered and parcelled in divisions and grain is given them, the last kernel being accounted for; Einar and Agnes have emptied their purses and the Mayor now turns to Brand for contribution. But the latter would feed hunger with ideals; if he gave, would it raise the people to a fuller life? They are sluggish, they are idolatrous, they allow themselves to be economically overpowered; they have naught to fall back on in their time of misery? Are they then worth saving? Here is the moral quibbling of a Hamlet.

The people's ire is raised and Brand is threatened with stones. But suddenly a woman comes into the midst, crying aloud for a priest; her husband, dwelling across the fjord, in mad fury has slain his starving child and in consequence " he cannot live and dare

not die." The Mayor is not interested in this narration; the case lies outside his division. Brand, nevertheless, sees his duty; he orders a boat unmoored and makes ready to go, although a storm is brewing. The people fall away from him, even the distraught woman would not dare the waves with him, giving as her village excuse that "the Dean would put the service off" in such weather. But Brand, notwithstanding, would risk his life, and he asks for one other to offer up his life also; the success of this voyage is to be no God's luck, but the demand of will. At first Agnes believes that Einar will respond to the call, yet he is pale and weak, and clings to life, and will not go, and thereby he forfeits the love of the girl; for the gap becomes deep betwixt them, and she is drawn nearer to Brand, perhaps due to a romantic thrill of adulation as well as to a ripening of spiritual realization. She goes with him and buffets the wind and the storm, while the men and women on shore watch breathlessly, and Gerd from the heights is seen with her witch ways. Brand wins the regard of the village folk, not by the willing he has done, though to him the will is the deed, but through the mere physical daring of the moment; he has done it bravely, though the Mayor could not see why he should have gone outside of his division. Ibsen loses no opportunity of satirizing frailty.

The man dies in the lonely hut, eased by the presence of the priest, but Brand has misgivings whether his children will not carry upon their own shoulders the heritage of their father's sin. In thus mixing up the questions of parental responsibility, Ibsen confuses the acquired with the innate; the reference is

significant only as being the earliest suggestion in his theatre of the scientific principle of heredity.

In this frame of mind they peasants seek him, beg him to be their pastor; they would welcome to their fold one who has fervour such as his. Brand hesitates; his eye is upon vaster fields. Is it right to be sacrificed to a narrow berth? The large ambition is his very life. Here the peasants gain the better of him; according to his own words, he must give up life if necessary; he must always be ready to sacrifice; therefore it is his duty to remain. Brand's selfishness rises up in rebellion; he does not regard the people's momentary enthusiasm for his deed; he is regarding individuality and personality as abstract virtues. His mistake lies in attempting to clothe the peasant stature in a cloak of universal size. For he says sternly:

> "If you cannot be what you ought,
> Be in good earnest what you may;
> Be heart and soul a man of clay."

This cry of his is the one idea permeating "Peer Gynt." After the peasants depart, Brand recognises the boldness of his determination to refashion man—to bring him away from sin and back to the image of God. He and Agnes are now alone; the latter has altered completely, her life work has become vivified to her; with her exulting nature she realizes that she shall people the world anew; whatever befalls, she will face pain and accomplish her work. Brand also feels a new world unfold within himself; if aught should prevent his will from accomplishing the Nirvana, he will slay, rather than fail to fulfil, Self. Yet

always he feels thrust upon him some heritage of debt, some great responsibility.

Then comes to him the dried-up figure of his mother, blinking out of the darkness of her home. "Sun's light . . . I never saw at all," confesses Ibsen through Brand. In the scene between the two, there are emphasized the cynicism of the priest and the sordid keenness of the parent. The latter had made her son a priest, the better to intercede for her at the last hour. He must not stake his life thoughtlessly as he did in the storm, she whines, for he will inherit her treasures—in worldly number a fair bequeathment—which he must not squander. There is no love lost between these two; the woman is a miser, her soul is gold-valued, and her son has fathomed the secret of her ill-gotten wealth; for she sought money in her husband death-room, disgusted that there was not more than she found, and Brand witnessed the scene; his love for her was naught from that time.

The old woman barters love for gold; her marriage with Brand's father had been on this basis. Here is where she found it necessary to make of her son a priest, so as to save her peasant soul. But, Brand argues, is the child steward of a parent's sin? In taking her riches he would assume her soul-debt; must not that soul-debt be settled before she dies? She has debased her body; and the spirit, the dwelling-place wherein God abides, she has desecrated. His analysis is two-fold; he will take his mother's debt, God's image, which she has blotted out in her soul, and within himself, "will-cleansed," he will realize this image anew; but her sin she herself must answer for; no

priest's work this! Her sin lies in the losing of her native human worth. If she needs him in the last hour he will come, provided she will repent beforehand; then he will shield her in all tenderness as priest and son. Brand's gentleness comes in flashes, followed always by the gathering of harshness. She must give up her riches, not bestow a mere money-alms here and there. Like Job, she must die in the ashes of repentance. This exaction of the priest is sufficient to distract his mother, who leaves, torn by fear, and ignorant of how Brand really feels. He is the sin-subduer of the age; in the struggle of his Night he sees the vision of his future way; Agnes is similarly awakened, her former happiness with Einar now being to her as mere dross. Is there not daily duty to perform here among peasant people? The God Brand is to slay shall be slain slowly; the people must be made whole, but not by "high heroic changes"; the priest in him will glorify the power of will; he needs must purify the folk in the valley, and scourge them through this will of his.

Einar now confronts the two, demanding Agnes; the situation is much like that between Falk and Guldstad in "Love's Comedy," where Svanhild had to make a choice. Einar pleads with Agnes, but she will not leave Brand, her master, friend and brother. Then the priest warns her to be careful; his demand is "All or Nothing"; "no abatement in distress, and for sin no tenderness." But despite the sternness of the demand she would go through night in order to face Brand's dawn, which her youthful elasticity imagines will assuredly come.

Three years roll away, and Agnes's first words

show that the two are now united in marriage, with a son as the issue. Their parsonage is in a cheerless place. Evidently Brand's wife is trying to temper his stoicism; the old mother lies at death's door, and the priest awaits a summons from her; even though it be his mother, he will not idolize kinship and go to her unsought. Yes, he is stern where principle is concerned, yet he begins to be racked by conscience. From Agnes the bloom has departed, so desolate the location of their home; their baby boy's very life is threatened by the chill and sunless waste. Yet Brand's wife and child have brought brightness into his life, brightness and tranquility; his martyrdom has been turned into the sweetness of success. Has he no duty to perform for them? The thorns are all to come at the moment when love is crowning him. Through his family he has grown to know his parishioners; for before enfolding all with one's sympathy, a soul must have experienced the love such as he has experienced for Agnes. She understands this, but furthermore she knows that the kind of love Brand gives is merciless, even though it chastens where it falls.

It is not that Brand is cruel; it is only that few can satisfy his demand of "All or Nothing"; even his wife, though confident that she can always meet it, has misgivings as to its right or necessity. Brand scourges the popular love; he champions only God's love based on God's justice of the Old Testament type, the inscrutable Father who forces one to drain the cup of bitterness to the lees. One must not haggle over compromise; even though lacking in will-power, one must struggle up to the very extent where

that lack begins; there must be no compromise such as Peer submits to; we must learn to live and not to preach our beliefs. Thus, in a sweep of passion, Agnes's faith is renewed by his words; she would follow him, confident in Brand's assurance that "no precipice is too steep for two."

With the Doctor, Brand is immovable; the former regards the priest as hard; in no respects does he find Brand doing the common, ordinary duty—he is impossible! Why wait for the summons from his mother? Why not act as a son? The Doctor deplores the fate of Agnes, the "hapless blossom," beneath a "pitiless grasp"! What avails it that Brand's will-account is full—is it right to neglect the love-account? But though the priest loves Agnes in his own way, he scorns the love which is a "smirch of lies." His wife, none the less, begins to wonder if will should be placed above human love. While much of this human contentment is a matter of will, and while by its exercise a man and his wife are able the better to pass through the agonies of daily existence, yet is the love which is known to the world, the ordinary world, so false after all?

Agnes clings to her husband, for she realizes that her spirit is judging his; even when Brand goes to the sick baby's crib, and sweats in anguish of soul, she deplores his fast-bound mission. "Oh, what a wealth of tender ruth," she exclaims, "lies hidden in this breast of steel." From one anguish to another the priest passes. A messenger arrives from his mother; she wishes her son and will give half her goods. It must be the whole, is the stern rebuke; then he will hasten to her. Another follows with the news

that she will give nine-tenths, yet still it must be all or nothing for Brand. Indeed, God Himself would not be so hard! It is a mistaken imposition of duty which Brand takes upon himself. There are tears in his voice, nervousness in his manner; he is not blind to Agnes's trembling; he must suffer as Christ suffered. The task is hard!



"Is there real sacrifice anywhere in this world?" he cries. Agnes has the right view of things. Since humanity is in truth falling, is it not best to save them in their fall rather than to demand the whole, which they cannot give, and let them sink in default thereof? This is no easy mission of Brand's, whichever way he turn with his motto. Though he preach that death cannot touch the blameless, he knows his boy's life is in jeopardy; though he propound the doctrine of sacrifice, he realizes that his has been no real sacrifice according to his hard demands, since he has had Agnes with him to give him courage. What he really must have is the stern self-denial of which Pastor Lammers preached.

The Mayor visits him in his parsonage, well-meaning perhaps—a little man described graphically as "a bracketed parenthesis." He has come on a delicate mission, which he performs "diplomatically"; he has heard of Brand's inheritance from his mother, which means that the priest will be able to obtain whatever worldly position he seeks; money furthers ambition: this is the practical view of "Love's Comedy." The fact is that the Mayor invites Brand to go elsewhere—to go away from them; he knows the limitations confronting Brand in a small community are binding; the people are not of a piece or of the

same calibre with him; they are peasants! What he needs for his stoical demands are citizens. Here, Ibsen, through Brand, lashes Norway. Is there any excuse to whine, as Norway whined in the '60's, that "we're small foes." The Mayor represents the shortsightedness of Ibsen's country.

From a practical side the Mayor is assuredly correct, however. The references to Norway occur constantly, and they are all of the same character—deploring national inaction and national smugness; the reader feels, especially in the last act, that Ibsen borders upon the verge of unnecessary propagandism; but if his purpose was to create colour thereby, he succeeded well. The Mayor is a living figure, fully developed in all his immense failings and small virtues. He glorifies the deeds of past history, those very deeds which, in Ibsen's belief, have impressed their deceptions upon the countenance of the Norwegian race. But the Mayor is content with moderation in life, and here is where he differs from Brand; for he says: "You desire, with main and might, at the same time to plough and fight." If Brand should leave them, then the Mayor himself would attend to his little flocks, would by degrees lift them to purer air, to the atmosphere which would best suit them. However Ibsen might satirize the Mayor's plain speech, the little dignitary is, none the less, better cognizant of the capabilities of the peasants than Brand; to make them aware of Faith and the real life, to have them realize the difference between mere Doctrine and Will, they must not be confused as Brand has confused them. They must be appealed to according to the plane of their own in-

tellects and vision. Therefore, should he persist in remaining, he must be content to stay within conventional bcunds; he must not try to make "every working-day a Sabbath."

This is too much for the priest; he turns with savage spleen upon the Mayor; to do as thus commanded would be to change his soul. No, it shall be war to the end; he will free the people, as Ibsen would free Norway, from the "bureaucrat-crew." He will, at all hazards, be himself,[1] which, as Herford claims, means that his character shall triumph "over impulse and over circumstances." The Mayor sees it in another light; to fight his tiny community with a world-policy means destruction to the one who tries; he is not totally devoid of ideals, but his will is of the common level and within easy comprehension; he believes in the support of numbers rather than in the quality of a few. Brand watches him go, and thinks him a man not half bad of heart and head, yet just the sort to deter progress—a narrow soul that makes concessions at all steps.

When the doctor brings news of the death of his mother—still unrepentant—Brand is not callous; he receives his first crushing disappointment with suppressed emotion. The doctor tries to make him see that the world must regard the limitations of humanity. This is an opportunity for Brand to criticise the idea of the *human*, as he before scourged the popular conception of Love; he is irritated by that word *humane;* when Jesus died, was God humane? There are two things to consider here, as pointed out

[1] Olson calls attention to a poem by Wergeland in which the doctrine, "Be yourself," is upheld.

by Olson. To Brand, God is the God of Law and not the God of Love; Christ to him is the martyr, according to Herford, and not the Redeemer.

The child's condition takes a sudden turn for the worse; is the finger of the Lord pointed in righteous wrath at Brand? When he hears that naught will save his son but immediate departure from the dank environment, he loses perspective of his purpose and immediately prepares to leave. Is this his philosophy—to demand of the world what he himself cannot countenance? He could see others drown, but now, when he is the one in danger, to the winds with his philosophy! The doctor does not blame him; but he cannot resist calling Brand's attention to the fact that even he, when the demand is made, cannot face the consequences; it is the natural father cropping out.

The momentary spasm leaves Brand; he slowly regains the consciousness of his mission. The Mayor spreads report of the priest's shortcomings, and Brand is met by a peasant who twits him with his weakness when he will not allow the same weakness in others. For the first time Brand realizes how hard others may be, not comprehending that this is but a faint reflex of his own world policy.

Agnes stands ready to go, while Brand, stunned by the reality, is torn by the agony of necessary decision. At this critical point Gerd appears. Her external significance is the working of Brand's conscience; she hints that after all he is not the whole man—not the parson that he pretended to be; the parson has flown on the back of her falcon—a symbol which places the bird of prey in the same line

with Peer's Boyg[1]—both, spirits of compromise, Gerd, anyway, in the fanciful vigour of her conception, reveals how naturally Ibsen found himself prepared to write his next drama. Her appearance at this point precipitates matters; she possesses the imagination of Peer, only she serves as a force working on character outside of herself.

Between Agnes and Brand comes the terrible realization of their duty. Which one of them shall decide the thing to do? She is mother; is it not with her to act? Still more, she is wife, and she must regard her husband's mission. Brand dreads the ordeal, yet it is his duty to remain—otherwise his whole faith has been a mere husk. I cannot quite understand the full psychology of Agnes's quiescence here; much more can Brand's logical cruelty be justified. Lifting the child on high, Agnes consecrates him to the issue. Brand is the one who totters and shows his weakness. He calls on Jesus—the Son of divine mercy; in his Gethsemane hour, the Jehovah of his early struggle will not do. By his weeping, Brand shows that his heart is realizing the necessity for a God of Love.

In the next act, conflicting motives crowd one upon the other. The child is dead, and Agnes treasures the memory of his little life. Over some material things connected with him her nature trembles; it is just with these things that Brand intentionally chafes the wound that scars her soul. Is it that his added

[1] Prof. Olson refers the reader to Jonas Lie's stories, "Weird Tales from Northern Lands," translated by R. Nisbet Bain, containing the same fantasy used by Ibsen in conceiving Gerd and Peer.

harshness toward her serves to cover up his own agony? Agnes watches the terrible stain of suffering in his face, the heart's dew in his eyes. Now, more than ever, he needs her, yet how much harder for her who remains at home inactive, crooning the woman's saga, the same song of Ingeborg, in "The Pretenders."

What has the sadness done for Brand? It has made him long more and more for a loving God, but since God to him still remains the Master, he must cling to Agnes's love instead. Again Ibsen indicates his theory of feminine dependence. Perhaps this is her work, but the memory of her child comes between her and the vision of her goal. Once and for all, Brand would harden for Agnes the memory of the dead, even though she shrink from him; his measures are always heroic, whereas what she needs is gentleness. The realm he seeks is too vast for her, which shows her that perhaps the church in which she has been nurtured is too small. This last supposition seizes hold of Brand; Gerd likewise has sneered at the church in the valley. It dawns upon him to build the church into a greater edifice. Again has Agnes by her suggestion guided him; she had heretofore shown him where his work lay; she has now pointed to the next urgent need. Once more Agnes is lifted to the sphere of exaltation by the thought of her service.

The Mayor, meanwhile, acknowledges defeat in the face of Brand's success with his people. But has he not now gone far enough? No, the battle Brand wages never ends; still must there be sacrifice and more sacrifice. Is there not, however, a point where

the world's humanity will mitigate the cost? The Mayor has this view—if after working along one course, no results are gained, then were it best to compromise with conditions. He will take the average and not the exceptional nature; he will seek the common good; his ideas must bud into material improvement, else he believes that he has failed. He will, therefore, build anew the favour he seems to have lost by Brand's presence; he would frame for his campaign some popular slogan to catch the votes. It shall be his desire to mitigate civil evil through public institutions which he shall erect; in this work he would have Brand's co-operation, but the priest is building too—he is to tear down the little church, and in its place to erect the large conception. Again, he and the Mayor are brought in opposition. The Mayor cannot see why the old church will not do in its present state—a patch here and there—but the other institutions, the mad-house, the pest house, and the rest, are urgent!

But, when Brand says that his building shall be paid for by himself, the Mayor is staggered—he is won over through the external magnificence of the scheme—he does not see that the priest would transform the spirit and only consider the material as the symbol. The Mayor is a typical magistrate. Brand's life is that of the Christian deprived of the humanitarian impulse, or more probably with that impulse stifled. His constant iteration of expiation and retribution is no excuse for his unswerving course; we realize all his anguish, but part of the sympathy is wasted since the sacrifice was neither inevitable nor essential.

Agnes, meanwhile, begins to decorate a Christmas tree in memory of last yule-tide's happiness; the scene recalls Nora's situation, when she moves about under stress of mind. Brand tramples on all her little subterfuges to allay her grief. Has she not more to give to the great cause? Does not the demand of "All or Nothing" require her to relinquish even her memories? Agnes is nearing despair, Brand is deluged in grief almost beyond the point of endurance. He realizes that the strain is telling on his wife's physical condition; to lose her will be too much. He suffers because his love is human, while his task is superhuman, if it is not inhuman.

Now comes the height of sacrifice. While Agnes goes over the dead baby's clothes, an old woman enters with a child; it is the final test—Agnes must give to her. The gypsy woman is sympathetically drawn, a fact which Olsen acknowledges to be a rare instance in Norwegian literature. The situation mounts from point to point in intensity. Agnes finally gives all of her baby trinkets, not gladly, but through a sense of duty. That spirit is not right, according to Brand, so the supernal effort follows; she has concealed in the bosom of her gown one small cap, and in the end that goes too; with it there seems to be lifted a weight from Agnes. It is the last sacrifice, greater perhaps than Brand could ever make—for she has seen him under varying circumstances. Once more he needs must make a choice. She has given and by giving has sealed her death doom, for the mother in her requires the idols that bring with them the comfort of memory. Either Brand must descend from his dizzy height and give her what

her sorrow needs, or else he must face the penalty. Yet, if he relent, then what of his mission?

Brand was wholly capable of active love; he wilfully sacrificed it to the fulfilment of his will. With the death of Agnes, there now creeps over him a change, which, after a year and a half, has had time to ripen and to deepen. The last act of the drama is a conglomerate mass of theory, preaching, character flashes, and crumbling of the ideal conception. The church is completed, and "officialdom" gathers around it in the shape of the sexton and the schoolmaster; in them Ibsen has his sportive time, which means that he vents his sarcasm upon the weakness of national intention. There is constant return to this topic.

Later, we shall find it necessary to analyze the discussions upon church and state that occur between Brand and the Dean; it is only essential here to gather together the points transforming the priest. He realizes that, by the death of Agnes, the element of affection has been removed from his work; all of his striving seems to have been in vain without her. A doubt arises in his mind as to whether the people's spirit has grown with the enlarging of the church. The Mayor, the Dean, do not understand his point of view. They think the consecration of the building is all that is now necessary to impress the people with the immensity of the church. But Brand asks for the cleansed soul to dwell therein. The Dean, now that the church is built, suggests that Brand must bring his congregation into some uniformity of belief—"use the same comb for all the flock." The Church owes its duty to the State, according to the Dean;

therefore the priest is a servant of the State. At last Brand comprehends his meaning; he is slowly being dragged into "officialdom"—a thing he has most dreaded. But the way is still open to him for escape. Brand's faith is not the same as the Dean's—it is bound up in the daily life he leads and is not forthcoming only on special occasions. The Dean's faith is made for Sundays. No, Brand will not give up an iota of his Ideal for the State; he will not bend his will to another's. It is this unyielding will that is his final undoing.

Though the Dean is grossly worldly, he still displays some human insight. Indeed, "no man wins the fight with fortune, but in alliance with his time," in some things if not in all. Brand revolts against the Dean's official regulations for religion. Did he give up so much for this result? Here is the first suggestion that in Brand's mind there enters the thought that he might have accomplished his aims through other means less hard; Ibsen, later in life, was to have the same misgivings. In his dilemma he feels more and more the loss of Agnes, who was always his support and comfort.

The last time Brand confronts Einar, he finds the latter in a transition stage, a man who has been saved from a fallen state; who has been transformed from gambler and drunkard into a missionary—an Ibsenism, suggesting Peer's Bible-trading in Africa. The dramatist is doing something he often practised in his plays; he is forcing Einar to satirize himself. His pietism is insufferable, and, in a half-humorous fashion, he knows it. He has been made religious by being wrung through the mangle of

Ecclesiasticism. His image, as seen by Brand, brings the priest to his full senses again. The way of these ordinary folk in his parish is too narrow, the Mayor too matter-of-fact, the Dean too hypocritical. He has been deceived in the building of his church; the Devil is compromise; religion is not outward pomp but inward trial. What was his church to be but one whose shadow is to fall over everything on earth, "not alone on faith and creed." The religion these worldly people speak of is mockery; if it is Christianity, with its deceits, then he will have none of it. He wants the healthy soul, not the souls that approach God as invalids; his church is the church of life, recognising no boundary—therefore the mere building is naught. Brand locks the door of his new church and casts the key into the river.[1] Forward he goes, followed by the multitude, who are carried away by the intensity of the moment. Brand possesses the magnetic power of the evangelist. The Mayor and the Dean are startled, yet they are keen enough not only to understand that these frenzied folk will return, but they are inventive enough to use the means to make them return.

These followers of Brand suffer. The steep way may be the short way, nevertheless they suffer! They hunger, they droop, they fear death, and all the while their priest fails to perform a miracle to alleviate

[1] From Rome, in October, 1866, Ibsen wrote to Björnson enquiring about a performance of the fourth act of "Brand," which had been given for an actor's benefit. In September, 1866, the play formed part of the Christiania Theatre repertoire. In a letter to Hegel, Ibsen acknowledged that the *Morgenblad* for December 1 and December 4, 1866, contained some of the best Norwegian criticisms of "Brand."

their pain. When asked where this effort will end, Brand staggers them with his answer. The war will last as long as life itself; in the struggle they will lose their abhorred gods, and will gain a soul entire, a faith that soars, a will that is healthy and strong; mayhap they will be crowned with thorns, yet Death will be turned into Victory. The people fall away from him; they will have none of his triumph which means death!

At this psychological moment, the Dean arrives—he whom Brand calls the soul's scourge. His offer to them is forgiveness for their obedience; he will teach them the faith suitable to dalesmen. Soon the restlessness which Brand has created in their midst will abate. Then comes the Mayor, inflated with important news. The fjord has a wealth of fish, he announces; this will give the villagers material joys; this is more tangible "than idly pining for the sky." Return, and their worldly condition will be improved. Brand hears his own misdeeds narrated by these "officials," and, as the crowd becomes more incensed, they stone him and drive him out into the wild. The village scene ends consistently. The Dean says much about the humanity of Christianity, which in no full way does he really understand. The Mayor promises to appoint a committee to look into existing evils; this is sarcastic, since Ibsen considered committees mere compromises in place of the strong individual. After some minor quibbling is recorded the act ends.

I agree with Olson that had Ibsen's play not had some value deeper and more permanent than its satiric worth, it would have ended here. But, as we have intimated, the farther Ibsen progressed in the

writing of "Brand," the more interested he became in the evolving of the character he had created; therefore it was incumbent upon him to trace the final consequence of his many acts of so-called sacrifice; these solutions complete the drama.[1]

High up among the mountains wanders Brand, in the midst of peaks and clouds and brooding storm. Everyone but himself fears sacrifice; they seem to believe that since Christ died upon the cross for their sins, they need worry no longer. These nerveless folk have not responded to Brand's endeavour to take them out of their soul-decay. Assuredly this is Ibsen talking at Norway; so much so, indeed, that at this point, in a long speech, he slips the personality of Brand and becomes the agitator, the critic complaining of the material progress of his country,[2] which is content with a faint heart. In one way this is a speech of despair, Brand throwing himself face downward in the snow.

Thus attune to conscience pangs, he hears an invisible choir through the storm. Dreamer he is, earth born, and he shall never inherit the kingdom

[1] "Brand" was never intended for the stage, but notwithstanding, either in part or as a whole, it has been given many times. See Halvorsen, who likewise mentions musical settings. In 1895, October, August Lindberg and his wife appeared in a cast which included Frk. Hulda Englund. "Brand," however, has never been presented, as yet, in this country. Its technical difficulties are just as great as in "Peer Gynt," though the latter has the saving grace of variety, as well as containing light fantasy. Miss Englund appeared in America, presenting scenes from "Peer Gynt," in 1906-7.

[2] English capital built the first railroad in Norway during 1850, and thereafter did much to foster every industry. See Olson.

of heaven. The phantom of Agnes tempts him, unfolds before him life as it would have been had he not been as he was. Brand reaches out with a human cry—but no, not yet can he claim even the vision of his wife and child until the cure is effected. He must forget his demand of "All or Nothing." The phantom pleads; still Brand remains firm; he would even lose the vision rather than relinquish his goal; he will not compromise. Still there is left him the path of yearning, which he had never fully seen before because he had never, until now, allowed his heart to yearn.

In the midst of this struggle enters Gerd; the falcon's wings have passed over Brand in flight, for the wild girl is pursuing him with a rifle.[1] Will she be able to kill this spirit of compromise? Gerd pauses to note the priest—he is lame, blood-spattered, an outcast. For the first time Gerd sees the Christ beneath Brand's outward garb, but her worship has small effect on the priest; he is humbled in spirit, yet onward, battered and bruised, he must go till the end. Up toward the Ice-Church he tends, brought there by the persistency with which he has clung to the demand for "All or Naught." Here, perhaps, the sufficiency of will may be found, but this is not enough. He has striven by this will for freedom of the kind which the sole practice of will gains; but the Ice-Church is cold, it lacks true life and warmth and love. For many years Ibsen was preparing for himself just such an edifice. Brand bursts into tears, pure human drops of anguish; he calls on Christ, the incarnation of Love. At last this is what he wants;

[1] Compare a similar situation in "The Wild Duck."

he is famishing for the religion of Love, not of Law.

The final pages of "Brand" contain many questions to be answered; the obscure handling of heredity is a flaw of constructive imagination as well as a forced principle on Ibsen's part. Gerd's relationship is only dimly suggested—her mother, a gypsy, wed to a man who had been spurned by Brand's own mother. There are four points well made by Olson; having determined in his mind that Gerd is somehow representative of the guilt of Brand's mother, and is thus the child of betrayed love just as Brand is the child of a loveless marriage (accounting through heredity for Brand's lack of love in himself); having determined that the hawk or compromise could never enter the Ice-Church of absolute individualism, being a symbol of the spirit of law and order—he thus accounts for Gerd's shooting of the hawk,[1] since the force of rebellion against law as represented in herself would certainly not countenance the symbol of organized society. Bearing these facts in mind, at one moment it would seem that Ibsen tries to justify Brand's past; still, in another passage, despite his humbled condition, Brand breaks so suddenly from his past that one imagines Ibsen to have shown the spirit of revolt, to have turned against the philosophy he has in five acts builded. As Gerd's rifle-shot brings down the avalanche, and as the falcon, Parsifal-like, turns into the vision of Love, Brand meets the crushing torrent with a question of doubt. He cries out above

[1] The final scene with Gerd, Havelock Ellis compares with "King Lear." Other comparisons are Gosse's *Sidney Dobell's* "Balder," and Arthur Symons's *Blake's* "Everlasting Gospel."

the roar to know whether, having willed to the utmost, he shall miss the light entirely—while above the roar of thunder sounds the voice, triumphant, proclaiming the God of Love.[1]

It is necessary thus to outline minutely the plot of "Brand," since, with its complementary, "Peer Gynt," the fundamental ethics of life, as Ibsen saw them, receive adequate statement. I cannot believe that he has answered any question definitely in "Brand"; he has only succeeded in showing very plainly that absolute freedom usually finds its natural consequences in death. He neither approves nor disapproves of Brand's actions—occupying, as the observer tries to do, a middle course. It is true, as Dowden has pointed out, that one involuntarily assigns the hero, Brand, to Emperor Julian's second empire of spirit, as outlined in "Emperor and Galilean"; he does not attempt to compare the double-mindedness of Julian with the single-minded purpose of the priest, but I believe that a reader after going carefully through the meaning of "Emperor and Galilean" will be able to understand Ibsen's true position as regards the worth of "Brand" and "Peer Gynt" individually, and as regards their true relations, one with the other.

That he was not wholly in sympathy with the man of one idea, who is obliged to sacrifice his whole duty, is clearly seen in the solution of both "Brand" and

[1] Mr. Huneker, like many other interpreters of Ibsen, calls attention to the dramatist's use again and again of the same symbol. Compare the Ice-Church in "Brand" with the edifice in "The Master Builder"; and also the avalanche here with that which terminates "When We Dead Awaken."

"Peer Gynt"; that he was not wholly in accord with Kierkegaard is seen by the fact that he did not in any way make the character of Brand aught but human, whereas, according to Brandes, the Danish philosopher infused the individual with something of the supernatural.[1]

Wicksteed's analysis adopts the conciliatory method; it tries to show wherein Brand's philosophy might be reconciled with actual conditions. And this could have been done simply by the practice of the human spirit. Christ demanded much of the soul in His teachings, but His demands did not seem unattainable because they were tempered by an all-embracing love. Several times Brand suggests that his mission is the same as that of Jesus, but it is the mere husk deprived of the saving grace of life.

Critics are nevertheless right in maintaining that the energy of "Brand" is superb,[2] and that the or-

[1] Charles Sarolea believes that an interesting comparison might be made of "Brand" with Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus," especially the chapters on "The Everlasting Yea," and "The Everlasting Nay."

[2] According to Halvorsen, note the French translation of "Brand" by Comte Prozor (1895) and the German translations by P. F. Siebold (1872), Julie Ruhkopf (1874), Alfr. Frhrn. von Wolzogen (1876), L. Passarge (1882). Commentaries: Leo Berg (Berlin, 1887); *The Westminster Review*, 1891, (R. A. Armstrong); *New England Magazine*, 1890, Oct. (Prof. Arthur); L. Bernard; "La Littérature Scandinave," (Paris, 1895); *Journal des Débats*, July, 1895 (Jules Lemaître); *Morgenbladet*, 1866, Nos. 242, 249, 256-263 (M. J. Monrad). See C. H. Herford's translation of "Brand" (Heinemann); and translations by F. Edmund Garrett (Fisher Unwin); W. Wilson (Methuen) [Reviewed by C. H. Herford, *Academy*, March 12, 1892, p. 248; *Academy*, June 23, 1894,

dinary striving in life, by contrast, appears small. This grandeur only makes the more pitiable the inevitable conclusions of both "Brand" and "Peer Gynt." No doubt this effect is what the poet wished ultimately to produce, for if the demand of "All or Nothing" end in death, and if he declaration or life-motto of Peer, "To thyself be sufficient," lead to death; if to go *around* and to go *through* are equally fraught with danger, then a middle course, such a one as is outlined in the idea of the "third empire," is necessarily the solution. Neither Peer nor Brand has a definite goal; such was not to be expected of the Gyntian Self, but the tragedy of the priest lay in the energy which was never centralized but too all-conclusive in its reforms.

The sane view of the "Brand" philosophy is seen through the eyes of the doctor; perhaps his very profession emphasizes for him that one must show sympathy in order to lead. But though Brand had the potential love in him, and the potential sympathy as well, he scourged where he should have given a brotherly slap on the back. He had the quality of the finest endeavour in him; his idea of duty, however, was a mistaken one. Though he exalt Agnes, he tortured her; no excuses can be offered to cover that; he followed his own theories in regard to the State and ended in being considered an outcast, whereas, since the Mayor had some admiration for him, he might have worked his policies indirectly and done

For references to "Brand," see "Le Mouvement Littéraire ranger," Arvède Barine—*La Revue Politique et Littéraire*, mber 15, 1877, p. 258; 2e, ser., 7e an., No. 11; see same , July 25, 1874, a study of Ibsen by Léo Quesnel.

just as much good to all. It is more profitable to interpret "Brand" from the side of the tangible than from that of the mystical.

No doubt, in calling Brand anti-Christian, Boyesen meant in the orthodox sense. The ethical student will at once agree with him that Ibsen overlooked the fact that the ideal of duty, while it demands sacrifice of the one seeking the goal, does not involve the same sacrifice of others whether they will or no; Brand had no ethical right to demand of Agnes what he did demand. Furthermore, as tersely put by Boyesen, "a lack of power, of ability, may be pardoned, according to Ibsen; but a lack of will, never." We cannot accuse Brand of a lack of will, even though it was only through his failure that he won protection of the divine love.

Edouard Rod, always discreet in his judgment, found in the poem the most interesting example of philosophy converted effectively into stage dynamics. In his craftsmanship throughout "Brand" and "Peer Gynt," more so than in "Emperor and Galilean," Ibsen introduced philosophy deftly shot through with poignant irony, fantasy, and different shades of character humour; it is this which makes these dramas distinctively unique in their line. The fault with the character of Brand is that it lacks a sense of humour which might have tempered the exercise of his will; only by the intermittent cries of agony with which Ibsen wisely humanizes the strain, and thus converts the reader's repulsion into a feeling of undoubted sympathy for the man if not for his methods, is the machinery tempered in its terrific cataclysm. A question might be raised as to whether

Brand, in his defiance of divine grace, was able to save himself through the practice of abnormal will. But to answer this satisfactorily would be to enter the realms of theology and religion, whereas, the poem should be strictly studied from its ethical inclination.

As a whole, the play is warm with the serious purpose of Ibsen; though it drags at times and becomes diffuse, it cannot but demand response because of its energy. Its lack is the limitation of Ibsen's own attitude toward the world; he could not give an answer to the problem because, in his own life, he had not solved the riddle. One of its points of greatness, no less than probably its point of weakness, lies in the fact that it admits of so many phases of interpretation. Everyone tries and has tried to squeeze the intent of small points, whereas the play must be taken in its broad entirety. Critics turned, for instance, upon his unessential "doctor's Latin,"[1] phrases which may not have been classical, but, none the less, he said with impatience, served his purpose.

External interpretation always irritated Ibsen. When Laura Kieler, the authoress, sent him her novel, "Brand's Daughters," in which Brand's teachings were applied practically to life, wearied with so much discussion, Ibsen wrote to her from Dresden in June, 1870, that his poem was an æsthetic work and not a system of philosophy! He had experienced, not only observed the things he treated of; and impelled

[1] See such phrases as "quantum satis" and "caritas" in "Brand"; and "ingenium" and the reference to "perpetual motion" in "The Pretenders."

by an overpowering necessity of putting his thoughts into form, he had done so; now, he cared not whether his book demolished or built up!

That is to be kept in mind. So anxious are we to reach the thesis, the argument in Ibsen, that we are prone to overlook the outside. Unfortunately American and English readers can never understand the originality of verse construction in "Brand." The notes to Professor Olson's edition will give a glimmer as to the fine word distinctions, and Ibsen's own letters will show his endeavour to settle the question as to authentic spelling. Both Olson and Archer discuss the rhyme and metre scheme.[1] To the latter Ibsen is reported to have said, "I wanted a metre in which I could career where I would, as on horseback." The result is, according to a number of critics, akin to the form of Browning's "Christmas Eve and Easter Day."

Altogether, Ibsen's "Brand," the dramatic tragedy of the Ideal striven for at all hazards, is a work of world proportions. It has particularly appealed to Germany, and naturally so, in a country that produced Faust.

[1] See Archer's edition of "Brand" (vol. iii), Introduction, p. xi; also Olson, pp. 275, 277. The latter stars some of the Ibsen coined words—words with the sonorousness of Carlyle.

CHAPTER XI

PEER GYNT [1]

It is rarely that an actor, in a single rôle, finds the sum-total of his various abilities. Yet it would seem that in all the previous years of his experience Richard Mansfield had been preparing himself for some composite figure which would include the contrary moods of youth and old age, of sorrow and joy, of action and passiveness—in fine, the full gamut of compensating virtues and vices of which one person could be capable. Such a combination he obtained in Ibsen's "Peer Gynt," presented by him for the first time in Chicago, at the Grand Opera House, on October 24, 1906. In less than a year from that date the actor was dead.

It was a stupendous task, yet to Richard Mansfield the element of risk was alluring. It did not seem to daunt him that already the verdict had been passed that this epic drama was not intended for the stage—

[1] The basis for this chapter was an article by the author published during 1907 in *The Times Magazine*, under the title "Richard Mansfield and Peer Gynt." Through the courtesy of Mr. Frederick W. Richardson, the material has been placed at my further disposal. At the time of Mr. Mansfield's first appearance in the title rôle his personal representative, Mr. Paul Wilstach, sent me a copy of "The Richard Mansfield Acting Version of Peer Gynt" (The Reilly & Britton Co., Chicago, 1906), which, in comparison with the Archer text complete, reveals many "cuts"; additional pruning had to be done after the first night. It is a pleasure to record Mr. Wilstach's completion of a biography of Richard Mansfield, which will be published through the Scribners. There will be a full chapter on "Peer Gynt." At the time of Mr. Mansfield's death, the scenery for his production of "Peer Gynt" was purchased by Mr. Louis James.

by nature of its controversial dialogue as well as because of the peculiar exactions of its scenic demands. The presentation had seemed insurmountable, even to Ibsen himself.

By 1866, when "Brand" was published, Ibsen, while still to a certain degree hewing out his dramatic method, had revealed in their incipiency nearly every moral and philosophical principle which he was later to amplify in his social and symbolical plays. The work which he had been engaged upon so unremittingly had sapped his physical energy, and the completion of it removed the constraining grip of concentration. His nerves became very much unstrung, and malarial fever had set in; these facts, together with the absolute penury to which the family was reduced, brought him to the very lowest, and to the last—though he was far from realizing it—ebb of his struggle for existence. It was difficult to obtain the necessary medicines, and only through the devotion of his wife was Ibsen pulled through an ordeal which threatened his life.

Convalescence left him weak, yet chastened in spirit; from Dresden he wrote to Brandes during the winter of 1870, describing the ennoblement of this sickness, believing firmly that the fever had thoroughly sapped him of evil thoughts, and that during the time he was recovering his strength an untold feeling of worthiness came over him. This is the Ibsen trait—to believe firmly in the efficacy of a scourge.

"Something had now to be done to relieve the situation; one can afford in after years to read exaltation into events which can never return, but it is a ques-

tion whether Ibsen, in the midst of his poverty-stricken condition, realized to the full extent how far his illness had cleansed his soul. The moment engrossed his attention. In fact, Ibsen's letters around this time are filled with the deep note of despair; he was well-nigh driven to despondency, which played upon his imagination, upsetting him at every turn, and over every small detail. Even in his correspondence with Björnson he had to send his letters postage collect, for want of the necessary funds.

Thus it was that the author of "Brand" was forced to make a last appeal for another grant, and fearful lest something might go amiss he addressed it directly to King Charles himself, couched in the most earnest, most heart-impressive terms. It was, in truth, a humble petition asking for £90 (400 specie-dollars) yearly to devote himself to "my calling as a poet." While he was grateful for the reception of "Brand," favour of the kind received would not supply what he wanted, nor could he wait until the time arrived when he might again address the Storthing. Pride rings through the despair of his appeal; his King is the remaining hope. With his hand upon the object, yet without the means of adequate support, Ibsen cried out for help. Should one speak of surrender, why, then he knew how to take defeat, yet it would be hard, doubly hard, "since I have never given in before."

"It is not for a care-free existence I am fighting," he wrote, "but for the possibility of devoting myself to the task which I believe and know has been laid upon me by God." Ibsen's ambition was to make the leaders of Norway think great thoughts.

In contrast with this dire situation it is well to note that from Rome, in April, 1885, Ibsen told Hegel of his allowing Josephson at Stockholm to have the permanent acting rights of "Brand" for 400 kroner, a concession due to the difficulty of mounting the piece. "But," he added, "the money arrangements are, fortunately, of less importance to me now than when I was beginning to write 'Brand' twenty years ago at Ariccia."

When the petition was mailed it left Ibsen with little peace of mind. In the interim he did many services for his friends—the small coterie of men to whom he clung as though they were all going to desert him. In one letter to Hegel he acknowledged the receipt of an advance on the second edition of "Brand," not forgetting, however, to deduct a small amount for the destitute family of an editor who had shown considerable sympathy for Denmark. He was writing to Birkeland, sending messages to all his old acquaintances, among them Botten-Hansen, who was always solicitous in his behalf. His mind was not wholly absorbed by anxiety, for he was still ruminating upon "Julian"; nor was his body totally neglected, since, with his knapsack over his shoulders, Ibsen had tramped, district by district, most of the territory covered by the Papal States. In the case of Björnson, while earnestly striving to sail clear of misunderstanding, the waters were just at that tension when the slightest zephyr would whip them into turbulent waves.

A young lawyer friend of George Brandes lived in Rome at this time—a man of some promise and of some connection. One night, after a visit to Sor-

rento, he jumped out of his bedroom window and was instantly killed. The facts have no connection with Ibsen, save that he had some acquaintance with Ludvig David, and that this incident, shocking in its essential details, served to draw Ibsen and Brandes together. The former wrote a long letter descriptive of all the circumstances—which, as an example of reportorial realism, indicates that Ibsen had no lack of skill in recording what he saw, in making inferences from the slightest clues, in noting faithfully the external scene. The grasp of the repulsive yet actual conditions was worthy of Poe; his details were accurately stated as though he might have been a detective; and his imagination built up the motives which might have led to the deed. He himself called his account cold and matter-of-fact; but it was not indifferent or ruthless. It was exact, and not devoid of feeling.

Thus occupied, Ibsen found himself with a load lifted from his mind. The King gave orders that the grant be made him; and on May 10, 1866, the Storthing voted unanimously in his favour. Botten-Hansen was partly responsible for this; in his paper, the *Illustreret Nyhedsblad*, he had forcibly and sympathetically outlined Ibsen's case, describing how imminent was the fate of the poet's promising career; there was a general upheaval in his behalf and the cloud became suddenly lifted. It was like magic to Ibsen's nature; "you splendid fellows," so he wrote to his friends; and the Norwegian Minister of State, George Sibbern, was thanked profoundly; specially bound copies of "Brand" exchanged hands quickly, and one was forwarded to His Majesty "as a small

expression of my most submissive gratitude." In view of Ibsen's later utterances about the State, this might seem contradictory; yet, on second thought, it will only be another point in favour of his pessimism, which aimed toward ultimate truth and worth.

Close upon this came an additional grant from the Scientific Society of Trondhjem. But though this tide of fortune relieved the tension, it did something far more lasting for Ibsen; it cleared his path of petty considerations. "My future is now assured," he said, "and I can devote myself undisturbedly to my calling."

Ibsen was greatly in need of change and recreation, so he left with his family for Frascati, situated in the Alban Mountains, near ancient Tusculum, and there began to think out his next work. He enjoyed nature in so far as it applied to some large human event, but he did not respond quickly to the love of beauty for its own sake. From the windows of his Palazzo rooms, overlooking the sea from a height of 2,000 feet, there stretched before him the Mediterranean, the Campagna, and Rome. In the twilight hours he could view many ranges of mountains along the Sabine country; but it was as a battlefield for the world's history that he considered them; if there was any other appreciation it was not enthusiastically shown. Strangely, Ibsen was beginning to think that he should go back to Norway.

Substantial returns from "Brand" were now being sent to him by Hegel, and he was busy planning the new edition of "Love's Comedy"; his affairs were in that state which would allow him to plan ahead, and he had even gone so far as to think of pur-

chasing a lottery ticket; there was shrewdness as well as love of excitement in the last venture.

On his return to Rome he found the people in a state of expectancy regarding how far the Papal power would hold out against political conditions confronting them; in case of a revolution he was ready to barricade himself and await the issue, but when actual disturbance threatened the Holy See by Garibaldi's determination to march upon Rome in September, 1867, Ibsen left with his family. Central and Southern Europe was in a ferment.

His correspondence was beginning to exhibit some irritation concerning Björnson, though on the surface it was trying to hold the break in check; he was busily engaged in attending to his publishing affairs, while at the same time he was revolving in his mind the themes for new plays, one of which was to have dealt with the period of Christian IV, if it had progressed any farther than a mere suggestion. He was ripe for the maturity of something. By January 5, 1867, he wrote to Hegel confessing that "Peer Gynt" was well under way.

He regarded it only as a long dramatic poem, half mythical yet modern, with no direct polemics and therefore far different in tone from "Brand"; he did rapid work upon it, disporting himself from act to act with a certain abandon which his former epic lacked. On January 5, 1867, the scenario was sketched and the first act begun; by March, 1867, he had advanced to the middle of the second act; and from Ischia, on August 8, he was sending to Hegel, by the Consul-General of Naples, three acts complete. The whole matter lay clearly before him; his exact-

ness in writing went so far that he could tell when each part would be finished, and how many pages the manuscript would make in print.

Ibsen was proud of the fantastic yet real character of "Peer Gynt"; the wild boy had lived in Gudbrandsdal, and was still known to the peasantry there. He had to resort to Asbjörnsen's "Norwegian Fairy Tale Book," in the section "Pictures from the Mountains," for whatever there was of known authenticity; but that there was little fact available appeared to please Ibsen, since it allowed freer scope to his imagination. While writing at Ischia, the weather was excruciatingly hot.

The publication of a new play by Ibsen was always an event of some moment; even thus early, due most likely to the unprecedented sale of "Brand," there was sufficient curiosity about the matter to prompt Ibsen's asking Hegel to maintain discreet silence about "Peer Gynt." When Ibsen surveyed in retrospect the writing of this formless piece, he said to Hansen that being so far away from home, he grew reckless, mixing legend with fact, and drawing on his youthful experiences. In Åse, he depicted his own mother, heightening the effect by contrasting her in treatment with Brand's mother;[1] in the wealth of John Gynt we detect the former comforts of the Ibsen family. "It is wild and formless," he confessed to Gosse, "written without regard to consequences—as I dare to write only far away from home."[2]

[1] His mother, so he confessed, also served as a model for Ingeborg in "The Pretenders."

[2] Brandes called this material thankless, though not denying

As I have said, it is a question whether in years to come the Norwegian's modern social dramas, with their theories of marriage, their problems involving the sex question, their discussions of heredity, of congenital decay, will survive the test of time, for the simple reason that the moral code is a relative code. If "Peer Gynt" outlasts "A Doll's House," some will say that this is probably due to the fact that poetry has a certain lasting quality over and above prose. But the form is only a framework after all. The essence of life in "Peer Gynt" rests in its freshness, its indefinite application, its peculiar appeal. We see in it the same austerity of design, despite its range of fancy and its simple, primitive folk-lore foundation, which marked "Brand"; and in both there is that epic strength beneath the allegory which characterizes the "Pilgrim's Progress."

In Ibsen's personal growth, "Peer Gynt" occupies a unique place; its significance can hardly be separated from its obverse companion. Together they

a certain attractiveness in the details. "Beauties and truths are of far less value than beauty and truth in the singular, and Ibsen's poem is neither beautiful nor true." Writing to him from Dresden, July 15, 1869, Ibsen is ready with his customary combativeness: "I cannot agree with you regarding the parts of 'Peer Gynt' referred to. Of course, I bow before the laws of beauty, but I have no regard for its conventions. You name Michael Angelo. In my opinion no one has sinned more against the conventions of beauty than he; nevertheless, everything which he has created is beautiful, because it is full of character. Raphael's art has never really warmed me. . . . Besides, the Southerner's æsthetic principles are quite different from ours; he wants absolute beauty; while to us conventional ugliness may be beautiful by virtue of its inherent truth." This is another sidelight on how Italy impressed Ibsen.

indicate his groping for a solution of that individualism which he was so ardently championing; they represent his feeling as being strongest at that time in favour of men, although his individualistic demands were later to include the whole realm of womanhood. "Think of me," exclaims Agnes, "sitting still . . . who am debarred from the strife and catch no glimmer from the fire of action."

That broadening of his viewpoint, so as to include both the masculine and the feminine right, is suggested by Jæger in his biography. In "Peer Gynt" one is able to detect the germ of Helmer's character as developed in "A Doll's House." Peer, caught in the wiles of Anitra's sensuousness, declares how his love for her must be satisfied: "Every inch and fibre of you, will-less, without yea or nay, I must know filled full of me." That is the Helmer who confronts Nora when she would leave home, husband, children, because of the lack of spiritual affinity in her married life.

"Thou art, first and foremost, wife and mother," says Helmer.

"That I no longer believe," is Nora's reply. "I believe that I am, first and foremost, a human being . . . "

Ibsen has conceived two figures to exemplify his meaning of the word Individuality—the plus and the minus poles of humanity; the stoic Brand, fighting against the very irresolution which Peer typifies; the one determinate, cruel in his over-riding will, marches *through* where Peer always goes *around*—facing death of parent, child and wife—meeting death himself—for an idea; the other, all-sufficient, losing per-

spective, responsibility, moral accountability—and even deceiving himself as to the reality of life. Neither of them is human, if judged literally; they are super-positive and super-negative figures; but both have points of human application. Each stands for a theory, yet each is a character. This was the double quality underlying Everyman.

In "Brand," the canvas is grim, cold, white, bleak and rugged; it is cruel, and so in his individuality is the hero. "Peer Gynt" is tempered slightly, though there are the same mountains and the same sheer rocks and tarns. Thereto is added the fancy of elfs and nixies—a fancy caught and quaintly expressed in the Grieg motive of the march through the Hall of the Dovrë King.

The struggle, the largeness of both these dramas are within. The soul-development is the prime factor. The symbolism in "Brand" is profuse and profound; in "Peer Gynt" it is wholly fantastic. Brand is the philosopher, the polemic, the critic of Norwegian weakness; Peer is the poet, the dreamer, the very weakness of Norway herself. Our analysis of "Brand" is sufficiently clear to emphasize that from its very vital expression resulted the natural birth of "Peer Gynt." Brand, the determinate, says: "Only go about this country and observe each man and you will see that everyone has learnt to be a little of everything . . . He is a fraction in great and small, a fraction in evil and a fraction in good; but the worst of it is, every factor of the fraction utterly vitiates all the rest." In this cry against vacillation, in Brand's plea, "Do not be one thing one day . . . and something else the next," we surely see Peer, the

inconstant. With Brand, he forms the compensating balance.

Who is this "Peer Gynt" of Ibsen's creation? Indeed, a picturesque, lovable rascal of a boy—one whose brain is a storehouse of legends so vivid as to be almost real, so real as to be almost personal. When Peer lies to his mother he does so with perfect unconcern, so near is he in imagination to the hero of his adventure. His mother listens to his hair-breadth happenings—and pales over her son's narrow escapes—then wakens to their utter falsity. Yet, though she is angry, the mother-instinct is above all other considerations. She has ambitions for Peer, while he dreams his time away and loses Ingrid, the village maid, for a wife. When Peer is told this he greets it lightly, and would go to the wedding. Does it avail if Åse, the mother, showers her wrath upon the head of this culpable, careless, heedless scapegrace? Does it matter if she threaten to shame him, to show him what he is worth? It has no effect upon Peer, who lifts the little woman to the roof of a shed and goes his way casually to Hegstad farm—the impostor, the ne'er-do-weel. He cares nothing for what he is; it is what he dreams of being—a Kaiser, a King—anything and everything but himself, which he should be.

With all his irresponsibility, however, Peer smarts under the gibes of the passers-by; he is known by his neighbours for an inconsequent liar. The villagers call him scatter-brains, and they censure him; but what at first might be called shame in Peer soon dwindles into mere indifference; he throws himself down in the road and watches a cloud change shape and bring

before him the whole fanciful panorama of his kaiserdom. Yet it is difficult for him to countenance scorn. As the people go by him in gay attire, Peer glances suddenly at his unfit clothes, and would go back; perhaps, after a fashion, he has some dim consciousness of the stinging truth of the gibes. But intention dies on the moment. The music of the dance is heard afar at Hegstad farm and carries Peer headlong into the midst of the revellers.

Here the girls already know him at his full value; they draw away with coquettish alarm, and on all sides he meets with scant welcome. But there are others present as downcast as he. The bride has locked herself away from the bridegroom, and he, disconsolate youth, has not the cunning or the ingenuity to reach her. The passing of Solveig at this moment is the first indication of the salvation theme in the drama. Peer asks her to dance—she is a stranger in that throng, yet she, too, like the rest, withdraws so soon as she learns his name—a name symbolical throughout the country of the type of man he is.

There is no conscience powerfully active in Peer Gynt; no instinctive regard for feeling. But Ibsen somehow does make us realize the indescribable union linking these two; despite Solveig's refusal to dance, notwithstanding Peer's subsequent drinking "to spite you, because you had hurt me"—somewhere, here, at this moment, destiny touches them both. Peer, the liar, moves idly from group to group, glibly narrating his marvellous happenings. Then in a spirit of pique, which follows Solveig's turning from him, he hearkens to the bridegroom. Will he

rescue the bride from her seclusion? Aye, and more too, there is devilment in Peer Gynt; he steals Ingrid, takes her away up the hill side, and thereby wins the enmity of the village folks. Åse reaches the scene at the height of the general surprise; her intention of soundly rating her son disappears in the face of a fear that some ill may befall him.

How about Ingrid, the bride? Peer wakens to his folly with the impetus taken from his sails; he will have naught to do with her now; the spirit is dull, the sensation of the moment exhausted.

> "Devil take all recollections!
> Devil take the tribe of women—
> All but one—!"

To him she has not the purity of Solveig; with her presence she does not sanctify. We needs must smile over the naïve lack in Peer's moral nature—the nature of a boy. He throws the girl over as he would a passing humour; he is blind to the consequences, though he cowers before them later in the Dovrë King's hall.

And so they part, just as Åse, with Solveig and her mother and father, arrive in search of the miscreant Peer, with his inheritance of a drunkard father and his own bringing up on dreams that served to make his mother forget her cares. Åse's excuse is this:

> "Some take to brandy, and others to lies;
> And we—why we took to fairy-tales
> Of princes and trolls, and of all sorts of beasts;
> And of bride-rapes as well."

For the first time Peer feels a glow of life in his veins; there is a necessity for action, else the village

will be on his heels; he sports with the sæter-girls, the sensuous side of his nature welling to the surface, and soon, alone and dizzy in the Rondë Mountains, heaviness overtakes him. A curious cloud again strikes his fancy and he gazes upward from the ground where he lies. He will, indeed, ride himself pure of soul, as the birds in the cold breath of the wind. Far and away he hies with the wandering of his mind, seeing the former wealth of his father. "Thou art come of great things," he cries, "and great things shall come of thee!" Will this not make him act? Thus dreaming, the Green-Clad Woman creeps upon him.

Let us seek to explain this symbol of darkness, of the supernatural. In his unconscious state, Peer comes beneath her wiles and falls to the lowest level of lust; he assumes part of the inhumanness of the trolls,—goblins, who gibber to him of sin, of wild living. He would deceive himself even at this moment, imagining the Dovrë woman very beautiful despite her deformity. In the midst of this hideous scene, carried there by this daughter of the Troll King, Peer crouches and shivers as misshapen creatures rise up before him and spread worry in their wake. He has been brought here on the back of a pig[1]—shall he make his escape? Behold, here before him is the consequence, the embodiment of self-sufficiency—the

[1] This riding on the backs of wild animals and birds is a common adventure in the legends of the North. For children, a most excellent story is that of "The Wonderful Adventures of Nils" by Selma Lagerlöf (Tr., Velma Swanston Howard) [Doubleday, Page, 1907], a book adopted by the public schools of Sweden.

trolls to themselves are enough! To be wholly like them, he must drink of their brew, even though it be not to his taste; 'tis enough for him that it is home-brewed—Ibsen's thrust at Norwegian provincialism.

Furthermore, Peer must wear a tail, he must slit his eyes in order to view things troll-fashion. But once changed, human sight will be his no longer. It is not Peer's custom to be constant to one thing, he must always have an outlet for retreat; his imagination he can rely on to carry him any distance, but his *will* is weak, inconstant. There is not that within him to be even a Troll entire. He now determines in a vague way to escape from this plague. But what of the Green-Clad Woman? Will he marry her, or will the son, symbolizing the consequences of his act, come ignobly into the world—a new sin born of an old one? Light-hearted boy—what means lust to him?

Intent on escape Peer fights his way, tortured by innumerable nixies. Into the coils of the Boyg he is cast—an obscure, an intangible spirit of compromise stretched in his path. He battles, he strikes, he tries to go forward and backward—always the Boyg—a maze of confusion. He must go around, he cannot go through. Is there such a coil of compromise for us to-day? Ask inclination if society will allow it to be satisfied—see whether habit and custom do not hem in the individual. Society would cast such as Brand into prison. From this nightmare of irresolution Peer wakens to find himself in the mountains by Åse's sæter. At a distance he catches a glimpse of Solveig. "Beg her," he pleads to the little sister, Helga, "beg her not to forget me!" Herein Peer grips our sympathy.

He does not lose sight of the fact that he is an outcast; dreamer though he be, the power of memory—an Ibsen trait—is always rife. And so he builds him a hut in the forest, the snow lying deep on the ground. Thus, alone, Solveig comes to him, drawn thither by a bond which Peer cannot quite understand. Pathos, tenderness creep into his soul as he takes the girl in—but passion, no, never! She has given up all for the love of him—will he understand? His joy is that of mere companionship—the sacrifice means nothing else; he grips naught but the husk of delight.

So housed, Peer once more is confronted by the Green-Clad Woman with the Ugly Brat—a living sign of his former lust—he who is lame in his shank "just as you too [Peer Gynt] are lame in your soul." Peer denies them both, but after all it is not an easy matter to discard one's thoughts and desires, once they are spent. The bare glimmer of conscience warns him this hideous fact will ever crop up between him and Solveig, the pure. What must he do? A positive action is the result; he must not contaminate Solveig's goodness—himself thus befouled, he slips away rather than soil by his presence.

He hastens to his mother's hut only to find her dying. Brand's mother dies also, but note the difference in each son. Brand has said that should his mother repent her ill-gotten gains, and should she then send for him he will come. His stoicism is a crucifixion for him. Peer sees his mother in the final throes, a glassy fixedness overspreading her eyes, and he dodges the immediate issue. In the spirit of fantastical bravado he drives her, with the bed-post as

horse, to the very gates of heaven—framing legend upon legend, drowning the death-rattle in the noise of his make-believe. The scene is throbbing with human value—the sheer wantonness of its action is compelling—the child-like beauty of its tragic inconsequence is the highest poetic expression in Ibsen. In the Mansfield production the tenderness of this situation was strikingly felt. Peer, the liar, was a most lovable fellow. Bending over the dead mother, he whispers:

> "For all of your days I thank you,
> For beatings and lullabys!"

Thirty years pass and Peer is middle-aged. From now on the most prosaic of incidents befall him; gross materialism works its ill. Ibsen makes use of a certain extravagance of conception here, but he falls into a critical vein that is incompatible with the dominant tone of the whole poem. In Morocco, Peer is Crœsus, surrounded by friends of all climes, men who tickle his vanity and have their eyes riveted on the main chance. He is still intent upon the gaining of his kaiserdom, but he does not seem to think it necessary to question his process toward attaining it. Out of sight, out of memory—the Green-Clad One and Solveig—those two extremes in his life's way! He has traded—and traded well—in slaves and in Bibles. Norway is in truth the faint-hearted replica of Peer Gynt, with the same indifferent religion and the same indefinite character. When Ibsen hits hard, he does not spare either Peer or the Nation:

> "The essence of the art of daring,
> The art of bravery in act,
> Is this: To stand with choice-free foot.

Amid the treacherous snares of life—
To know for sure that other days
Remain beyond the day of battle—
To know that ever in the rear
A bridge for your retreat stands open.
This theory has borne me on,
Has given my whole career its colour;
And this same theory I inherit,
A race-gift, from my childhod's home."

With no direct path in view, therefore, Peer Gynt would be Emperor over all the world by might of the wealth he has made. His vision thus distorted, as badly in its way as though his eyes had been slit troll-fashion, vainglorious and inflated by the idea of his own importance, it is not long before gold and yacht are craftily enticed from him by these various friends of his aboard, but not felicitously, however, in view of the outcome. Ibsen's sarcastic side-thrusts through this act are numberless and are of small value, except in so far as they give expression to his persistent irritation over national anæmia. There is a spectacular closing to Peer's "gentleman" days. A fearful explosion occurs on his yacht after it falls into the hands of his solicitous guests, and everything aboard is lost. First, fearful in his anathemas, Peer now gives thanks that he has escaped with his life. As for God, "He takes fatherly thought for my personal weal; but economical—no, that He isn't!"

In Mr. Mansfield's acting version, the scenes toward the close of the play are freely cut; confusion and loss of unity—if "Peer Gynt" may be said to have any artistic unity other than that every scene is a phase of this demand of his—result therefrom,

a fact which could have been avoided by sacrificing wholly those incidents or vagaries in the East. One is never a prophet in one's own country, but there is no telling how easily others may be deceived by the outward garb. Peer is hailed prophet in an Arabian camp because of a costume which is thrown in his way by chance. But he becomes neither prophet nor himself, though he easily deceives himself. Headlong he falls into greater absurdities, charmed by the physical grace of a maid named Anitra, inveigled by wiles and the rhythm of dance and of song, himself inflated by shallow feelings, a coxcomb of selfishness, blind to the fact that this same Anitra is waiting her moment to fleece him, which she soon proceeds to do. Thus rifled of wealth, Peer Gynt is wholly at a loss.

But as a dreamer, a self-deceiver, he is resourceful. Ibsen is inclined to mix his motives, perhaps the better to show that however bad he was in his weakness, Peer Gynt at least had some faint idea of this weakness of will. "Know you what it is to live?" asks he of Anitra:

> "It is to be wafted
> Dry-shod down the stream of time,
> Wholly, solely as oneself
> Aged eagle moults his plumage,
> Aged fogey lags declining, . . .
> One and all get withered souls.
> Youth! Ah Youth! I mean to reign . . .
> . . . enthronèd in the freshness
> Of a woman's virgin thoughts."

I cannot help but feel that this part of "Peer Gynt" prompted George Bernard Shaw to write his "Cæsar and Cleopatra." There is the same spaciousness of

scene, the same half realization of the poetry of the East, and the same jocose point of view. Ibsen gave reins to his fancy and went wheresoe'er the opportunity was best fitted for a few thrusts he wanted to make. He and Peer Gynt stand avowedly the same in small particulars.

Finding it necessary to prune still further, Mr. Mansfield omitted most of the final scenes in the fourth act—incidents thrusting sarcasm upon the language reformers; introducing a mad-house which occupies the same relation to Peer that the Ice-Church does to Brand, and interspersing the dialogue with unessential local, political, and social references. Then follows the real poetic and logical conclusion.

We are given a vision of Solveig waiting for the coming of her Peer, a motive beautifully conceived in music by Grieg. But it is a long voyage before their meeting, one fraught with many agonies for Peer—scenes which represent, in externalization, the spiritual upheaval in his breast. On board a ship in the North Sea, his solitary figure, careworn and soul-sick, is pathetic. Strange ideas come to him in the form of a Passenger, who, in grotesque manner, suggests to him a possible death at sea. Soon after, the vessel is wrecked and Peer fights for his life, and struggles to gain for himself alone the support of a floating spar; the weird Passenger haunts him even here. "Have you gained the victory that is given in dread?" he asks of Peer. Yes, this time fear does conquer the indifference of his nature. "I *must* ashore!" he cries. Ibsen wrote with a vagabond elation, and his technique was in thorough correspondence.

Because of this willing he soon finds himself near Solveig's hut, where an auction is going on; we are reminded somewhat of the return of Rip Van Winkle from the Kaatskill Mountains. Peer's name and the tradition of his wild ways are still common talk among the village people. Then, into their midst comes the wanderer—he would sell and be rid of that which he has bought with ruin—his dreams, his kaiserdom, his crown of straw—all he would sell.

It dawns upon him, while wandering in the deep forest soon after, that he is very near the hut he built for himself—it has sheltered Solveig these long years of his transgressing—there his true kaiserdom lay.

Already along the road the Button-Moulder is coming. He calls to Peer, as Death called to Everyman. What is to become of this Gyntian wreck? He is to be melted up in a crucible and used over again in the making of another man. For he is neither good nor bad—only cast, as it often happens, in a wrong mould of life. Peer himself confesses: "At worst you may call me a sort of a bungler—but certainly not an exceptional sinner." Can he then prove that he has been himself all these days? Where is the witness to appear in his behalf? In the hall of the Dovrë King did not Peer refuse to be changed into aught but himself? Yes, for his motto was that of the trolls—"To thyself be enough." Therefore it is useless for the Monster-King to appear in his defence.[1]

[1] In the Ibsen Conference, held by M. Henri Lichtenberger, we note the following: "Ibsen distingue entre la morale des hommes, qui est: 'Sois toi-même', et la morale des trolls, êtres inférieurs, moitié hommes, moitié bêtes, qui est: 'Suffis-toi à toi-même.' La première de ces formules définit l'individualisme

Solveig is singing nearby. "There," pleads Peer to the Button-Moulder, "there I will surely find the list of my sins." But Solveig, when questioned, knows naught of them. "Thou hast made all my life as a beautiful song," she says. "Where was I, as myself, all these years?" questions Peer, while Death stands by. "In my faith, in my hope, and in my love," she replies, a radiance suffusing her face. Down on his knees, with his head in her lap, Peer finds his kaiserdom at last. No matter whether Death overtake him now, this negative figure lives to see the error of his philosophy.

Here, then, is the story of Peer Gynt—a majestic moral tale, as enacted by Mr. Mansfield. The play is rich in atmosphere, varied in colour of mountain and moorland, and its extravagance of scene-display is one of the factors in the difficult way of its practical presentation. One reading of the text will suffice to indicate why the rôle in every particular covered the characteristics marking the work of Richard Mansfield. Never before then had such demands been focussed for him on a single character; even Cyrano de Bergerac lacked the youthfulness, though possessing a similar braggadocio. In "Peer Gynt" there are changes that occur from scene to scene, challenging comparison, so close do they follow one upon the other. The rôle calls for boyishness of soul as well as of body, a youth who sings a careless song, full of unalloyed exuberance. It calls for the process of growing old. The accomplishment of these demands was the final triumph of Mansfield, the actor.

permis et légitime; la seconde marque le point où il se fait égoïsme, et devient ainsi dégradant pour la nature humaine."

The first edition[1] of "Peer Gynt" was published on November 14, 1867, and, within a fortnight, it received another printing; it seized the Norwegian people because of its variety and fantasy, because, moreover, by the very criticism of national failings, a sense of possible national strength was suggested to them. To the very core it was a product of the North, instinct with its manners, its feelings, and its traditional aspirations; if the Italian landscape put any impress upon its scenic scheme, it is hardly evident. The satire is mingled with no spleen, and in fact made use of with no large organic purpose—and being but timely comment, this same satire, as applied to the constant references regarding Norway in 1867, is of no poignancy to-day.

The same grievance against Ibsen which was held over the unsolved problem in "Brand," may here be taken into account. There is no summing of philosophy, no satisfactory conclusion to a *potpourri* of doubts and fears and struggles. It is no new thing, Ibsen's dislike of Norway's self-sufficiency; and since he has before this proclaimed the rights of the individual, it is not surprising to find Peer protesting against the casting-ladle. The popular reception of the play was due largely to the imaginative vigour in contrast with "Brand." Björnson reviewed the book, and so did Clemens Petersen; the latter pro-

[1] 2d edition, Kbhvn., November 28, 1874; 3d edition, Kbhvn., September 24, 1874; 4th edition, Kbhvn., October 12, 1876; 5th edition, Kbhvn., September 22, 1881; 6th edition, Kbhvn., November 26, 1885; 7th edition, Kbhvn., April 29, 1886; 8th edition, Kbhvn., July 16, 1891; 9th edition, Kbhvn., December 15, 1893; 10th edition, Kbhvn., September 9, 1896. See Halvorsen.

tested against "its transpositions from reality to art," in which "it neither completely fulfils the requirements of art nor those of reality."

Ibsen always smarted under criticism; but never in so irritable a fashion as over Petersen. In the original, "Peer Gynt" was written in rhymed verse of different measures, and was severely criticised, both for its form and content. Undoubtedly Petersen did not give full value to the imaginative matrix of the piece when he assigned the whole to the "domain of polemical journalism," nor did he carefully consider the meaning of real poetry when he declared it no poetry at all. Stung to the quick, Ibsen would have had Björnson thrash him for the error of his ways.[1] "This article will come to burn and scathe his soul," Ibsen declared, for there is hardly a point of truth in his critical strictures. Let those who are prone to read symbolism into the dramas of Henrik Ibsen hearken to his treatment of Petersen's interpretation of the Strange Passenger as the symbol of terror; according to his declaration, he meant nothing of the kind—the scenes with this Strange Passenger were purely matters of caprice. With that high superiority born of the consciousness of his divine gift, Ibsen scouted the idea of "Peer Gynt" not being poetical. "My book *is* poetry," he cried out; "and if it is not, then it will be. The conception of poetry, in our

[1] Ibsen, however, was amenable to reason, and did not resent sincere criticism such as Brandes gave. He wrote to Gosse from Dresden, on October 14, 1872, thanking him for his fair interpretation of "Peer Gynt" which had appeared in *The Spectator;* "for your fault-finding I have no doubt there is reason; I see some of the defects of the work myself now."

country, in Norway, shall be made to conform to the book."

His letter to Björnson discussing the subject is a perfect example of his surety of individual viewpoint; he is prone, so he confesses, to dissect himself where it hurts most, and he is not afraid to probe. But he will not countenance lies. What Petersen has done for him, none the less is salutary. He wrote: "I feel that this anger is invigorating all my powers. If it be war, then let it be war! If I am no poet, then I have nothing to lose. I shall try my luck as a photographer.[1] My contemporaries in the North I shall take in hand, one after the other, as I have already taken the nationalist language reformers. I will not spare the child in the mother's womb, nor the thought or feeling that lies under the word of any living soul that deserves the honour of my notice."

The satire which the critics in Norway and Denmark discovered running through "Peer Gynt" was emphasized to the detriment of the lighter phase—the phase which turns Peer from a symbol into an individual. "Why cannot they read the book as a poem?" Ibsen queried. This assuredly is good advice for all who would take the book up for first introduction. The play is dependent upon its semi-legendary backbone—lightly, gracefully handled, with much more of the folk-lore element than conscious philosophical meaning. For it must be remembered that by the very creation of a character such as Peer, if the dramatist is true to his general premises, if he is faithful in reconciling the conditions of character with the conditions of circum-

[1] See the later satire in "The Wild Duck."

stance, there will be an inherent philosophy of life which comes with life rather than as a conscious adaptation or conception of the author. That is where so many interpreters assign to Ibsen, and as a matter of fact to every author of large primal vision, what is not designedly conceived, but what is unconsciously or subconsciously present.

Of course, Ibsen was always hiding behind his characters, and his denials must be taken cautiously. But I would prefer to measure "Peer Gynt" and place a value upon it from its fantastical and semi-human angle, rather than from any academic view of its ethics. The legendary sources, for the sake of convenience, are here summarized:

THE FOLK-LORE OF PEER GYNT

Based chiefly on Mr. William Archer's analysis.

Name of Peer Gynt. See Asbjörnsen, Moe. Collection of Tales, "Reindeer-Hunting in the Rondë Hills." *Both tales found in Archer's translation.*

Peer's Adventure (Act I, Sc. 1). Ibid. as above "Gudbrand Glesnë."

Sæter Girls (Act II, Sc. 3).
Boyg (Act II, Sc. 7).
Peer as a Fantasist. } *Asbjörnsen.*

Devil in a Nutshell. Asbjörnsen. "The Boy and the Devil."

Green-Clad One and Ugly Brat (Act III, Sc. 3).
Berthe Tuppenhaug's Stories.

Peer's Eyes and Standard of Hill-Trolls (Act II, Sc. 6).
Berthe Tuppenhaug's Stories.

Thread Ball episode (Act V, Sc. 6).
Berthe Tuppenhaug's Stories.

The Castle—"East of the Sun and West of the Moon" (Act III, Sc. 4). Asbjörnsen.
Found in Andrew Lang's "Blue Fairy Book."

Soria Moria Castle. Another legend by Asbjörnsen.
Peer and the Casting Ladle (Act V, Sc. 7).

According to Passarge, in Asbjörnsen's "The Smith Whom They Dared not Let into Hell." Archer disputes this.

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Tales from the Field. *G. W. Dasent.* 1874.
Round the Yule Log. *H. L. Brækstad.* 1881.
Folk and Fairy Tales. *P. Chr. Asbjörnsen. Tr., H. L. Brækstad. Introduction by Edmund W. Gosse. Armstrong,* 1883.
Ueber die letzte Dinge. *Otto Weininger,* 1907. [*Contains an exhaustive analysis of "Peer Gynt."*]

Neither "Brand" nor "Peer Gynt" was intended for stage production; Ibsen often made this statement, and reiterated it in 1881 to Passarge, who was making a German translation,[1] much to the surprise of Ibsen, who regarded the poem as being the one of his, "least likely to be understood out of Scandinavia." It certainly, to his mind, had been greatly misinterpreted at home, and in 1880 he was still nursing the idea of clearing all errors by writing his autobiographical interpretation of himself.

It is natural, however, that he should want to externalize his fantasy, and maybe he detected in "Peer Gynt" the opportunity of co-operating with the national opera movement. When he wrote to Edvard Grieg in January, 1874, apropos of the music, he had already in mind writing to Josephson, which he did the following month, telling of an adaptation which he

[1] Ibsen has been very extensively translated in Germany; note Borch, Hermann, Strodtmann, Lange, Brausewetter, Caroline von Klingenfeld. In 1897 a French version of "Peer Gynt" was made by Comte M. Prozor (See *La Nouvelle Revue,* 1896). For comment, notices, consult Halvorsen—Bibliography.

had made and which would be practical for performance. Josephson, though a Swede, was director of the Christiania Theatre, in the face of the opposing Norwegian National party, and, true to his desire to further his native land, Ibsen made the offer before turning to Copenhagen or Stockholm. He met Josephson when he returned to Christiania in the summer of 1874, and there, probably, the performance and the composition of the music were further discussed.

When Mr. Archer[1] first thought of translating "Peer Gynt," he considered seriously the advisability of using prose, to which Ibsen put forth a strong protest. So a middle course was adopted, where the metres without rhymes were retained wherever possible. The result is faithful and literal, however lacking it may be in spontaneity; removed from the libretto style, yet suggestive of it. Though misleading in prose form, a more eloquent fulness might have been gained; yet the variety of its natural swing would have been sacrificed.

Mr. Mansfield, of course, used the Archer version, taking more of the play than Ibsen ever thought to be practicable.[2] Scenes from the story had been given

[1] See the Introduction to "Peer Gynt"—the Archer definitive edition (1907), for a discussion of metre and rhyme, p. xxx *et seq.* Correspondence with Grieg was carried on, and in Letter 111, modifications and final results are well indicated.

[2] Regarding "Peer Gynt" performances, the reader is referred to the excellent chapter on this drama in Lothar's study. There are pictures of Klausen in the title rôle at the Christiania Theatre, February 24, 1876, and the scene of Åse's death in the Christiania production of March 9, 1892, when Björn Björnson was Peer, and Frl. Parelias was the mother. Hal-

before in America, notably in 1906, by an esoteric organism known as the Progressive Stage Society of New York. But Mansfield was the pioneer, and his stage version the first English acting book from the larger whole.

Where can we find the prototype of Peer Gynt? He is not only a philosopher, summed up as the Gyntish Self, that

"... world behind my forehead's arch, in force of which I'm no one else than I, no more than God's the Devil."

His figure looms forth from Norwegian tradition; he *is* the very tradition and reality; bits of this national experience become blended with his very existence. He is a composite of the peasantry—a figure as fantastical as Siegfried is heroic—both equally symbolic. There is much of the romantic and melodramatic grandiloquence of Cyrano de Bergerac in Peer; much of Everyman's universality. I like the comparison of Brand and Peer Gynt and Don Quixote —as the supreme or extreme types of Stoic, Fantasist, and Romanticist. This is a world-drama at the same time that it is a morality, with none of the ecclesiasticism of the latter, with none of its overburdened piety.

Its purpose is to throw strong upon the screen a negative picture in order that the positive might be more determinate by contrast. It triumphs in its ideal of womanhood—the purity of Solveig which

vorsen indicates additional performances, in especial that given in Paris at the Théâtre l'Œuvre, with Deval as Peer, Mlle. Suzanne Auclaire as Solveig, Mlle. Barbieri as Åse, and Lugné-Poë as the Dovrë King.

frees Peer, which lifts from him somehow the weight of his sin. But even though he is a lovable fellow beneath his wanton ways, and attracts, despite the immoral ease with which he dodges reality, there is naught in Peer Gynt from which a husband, a family man, could be moulded. There was no permanent structure to his soul; it was always in course of construction, and always, through lack of will, being annihilated. Ibsen's romantic tendencies kept Solveig true to such a type.

But in their relation do we not immediately recall Marguerite and Faust? Then there is a suggestion of Hamlet, not in dignity of soul—on the one hand a prince whose philosophy prevents him from acting, on the other hand a pauper, a vagabond, who does not act through the sheer lack of any power of concentration whatsoever. Surely the ghost of Denmark's king and the Troll scene are both the externalizing of inward states of being. It is this very inner quality which is more active and of more consequence both in "Brand" and "Peer Gynt" than the outward scene can suggest. And for that reason it is difficult for theatre-goers to escape mystification without previous and extended preparation. But there is no reason whatever for a lack of comprehension; with all of his vanity and cowardice and wavering, Ibsen's hero is a universal type; as an idea, he may demand a certain pondering; but so vividly and heartily is he clad in outward interest, as to be definite. Herein lay the art of the poet in Ibsen.

CHAPTER XII

THE FIRST OF THE SOCIAL DRAMAS

So steadily and consistently had Ibsen been working up the accomplishment of "Emperor and Galilean," that it seems almost natural to proceed with a consideration of that play, rather than to turn to one of a far different class. But several times was Ibsen to be interrupted in his progress by the interposition of a dramatic type far different from his previous style. Suddenly "Love's Comedy" intervened between the writing of "The Vikings at Helgeland" and "The Pretenders," breaking the continuity of the Saga period by the introduction of the Satiric. Now, between "Peer Gynt" and "Emperor and Galilean," was interposed "The League of Youth" as the first Ibsen experiment in social drama of the distinctively prosaic order.

We have it on good authority that with the change in outward circumstances effected by the grants made to Ibsen, there was a corresponding change in certain characteristics marking the man—a more determinate expression of his habits and manner—and in so far gripping him as to alter his handwriting. Ibsen's temper was in a very uncertain state; he was struggling against the idea of returning home, where he felt that he would either make enemies of everyone or be untrue to himself by sneaking himself into favour. He was not only writing to Hegel, calling attention to the literary limitation of Björnson's powers, as revealed in "The Fisher Maid," but he was bickering with Björnson over the very trivial fact that *he* liked decorations while the other did not. Ibsen could not approve of a republic; he was much

more in favour of a monarchy. "For my part," he wrote, "I feel that by declining [a decoration offered him] I should make myself guilty of a lie to myself and others. If I had had any real desire for such finery, I should certainly have refrained from playing the part of 'state-satirist.' But if the finery comes my way—why, then, no ado about it!"

In 1867, Dr. Brandes completed his "First Impression" of Ibsen, which was, in its general trend, of a favourable nature, however much he misinterpreted, or rather underestimated, "Peer Gynt." This fact, together with Ibsen's growing interest in Brandes' vigorous intellect, served to draw the two together. "It may almost be asserted," a German critic claims, "that Brandes' work, which created a new school of literature in Denmark, was also 'epoch-making' in Ibsen's literary career." Perhaps the latter felt that here was someone who really understood him, and while at the time, as it was later to be emphasized, this may have been true, still the moment was propitious for the making of a new and lasting friendship, when the old friendship with Björnson was in such imminent jeopardy.

Of course, there were deeper reasons than this behind the intense sympathy which sprang up between Brandes and Ibsen. First of all, he admired the Danish critic's challenge to orthodoxy,[1] and his upholding the stand taken in the direction of progress. He believed in Brandes' position as a force in that

[1] See accounts of Brandes' attack on Rasmus Nielsen's philosophy. Björnson was against Brandes. Nielsen was a disciple of Kierkegaard; in 1849 he began emphasizing his belief in the irreconcilability of religion and science.

"revolution of the spirit of man" which was about to occur. He considered as epoch-making "Main Currents in the Nineteenth Century Literature," the publication of which created a furor in Copenhagen, and practically closed the press to Brandes, unless he inserted his articles as paid advertisements. Ibsen was exultant in the battle which Brandes was thus waging for intellectual freedom; he drew much from his vigour, his penetration, his clarity; and in the "Æsthetical Studies" which Brandes published, he read and re-read the essays on the Comic, which he regarded as "a real gold mine."

There was perfect accord between them; their battles may have been in different spheres, but certainly in the same progressive direction; they both agreed in their attitude toward modern society, and that is why we find Brandes upholding Ibsen's plays that deal distinctively with the social problems. These two, however, had their little differences during the years, as, for instance, when Ibsen, who was not always a prompt correspondent, failing to answer a letter of his in 1896, Brandes, piqued by the silence, addressed him as "Honoured Sir." There followed a quick rebuke from Ibsen, who had always maintained that between them no lasting or serious rupture could ever occur. He wrote: "I think that it ought to be beneath the dignity of a man like you to behave so because of one or two letters that have not been written—by a man whose chief passion is certainly not correspondence, even with his best and dearest friends."

It is agreeable to consider this close association between men of such proportions. They both realized

the immense influence that the work of each would have upon their generation. There must have been something invigorating in Ibsen's confidence in Brandes' ability to do, and the constant iteration, in letters to Brandes, of the surety in his future. From Dresden, on May 18, 1871, Ibsen wrote, acknowledging the receipt of a photograph from Brandes. They had still the expectations of meeting.[1]

Another very agreeable view of Ibsen to be noted at this time was his continual watchfulness over his son Sigurd. The latter was now nine years old, at what the father considered to be a critical stage, when his education would have to be carefully planned. He was writing to Hegel from Rome on February 24, 1868, asking to have sent him a geography, a universal history, a history of Scandinavia, a book on natural history, an arithmetic, as well as some text manuals on general and Bible history, in which subjects Sigurd seems to have shown considerable interest. Heretofore, instruction had been somewhat desultory, and the variety of the range Ibsen wished Sigurd to cover was considerably outside the regular routine of study. In 1875, the father outlined his son's progress in a letter to Konrad Maurer, showing that he had himself given some thought to primary and secondary education in Germany, and adding that he wished his boy instructed in French and English by Frenchmen and Englishmen. "The creed taught in the school is not a matter of great moment," he said in his inquiry concerning the condition of educational affairs in Munich.

[1] Most of Brandes' imported works are accessible to English *readers*, especially "Main Currents."

After Sigurd Ibsen had attained manhood,[1] his father was equally solicitous regarding his welfare, exerting every effort to further him in his different diplomatic and official posts. In 1892, the names of Ibsen and Björnson were united through the marriage of Sigurd with Björnson's daughter.

In the spring of 1868 Ibsen again began to wander; but before leaving Rome he was given a dinner, and thereat many must have formed opinions as to how far Italian influence had affected him. Soon after, Julius Lange, a Danish art historian, who was at the banquet table, wrote of him, telling of his wit during the evening, but being overwrought by the spice of the devil in the Ibsen make-up. The Norwegian must have been airing in his positive manner some views relative to art, for Lange ends by claiming that "if it were my affair to cure him, I should order Greek literature or art—first in small doses, so that he should not spit them out; then ever larger and larger, until his sense for proportion and form came right."

[1] Sigurd Ibsen received his Doctor's degree from the University of Rome, and in 1882 an LL.D. was conferred upon him. In 1884 he joined the consulate department in Christiania and the following year was in the Swedish-Norwegian diplomatic service at Washington, D. C. (U. S. A.) and Vienna. In 1890, on account of Norwegian nationalistic causes, he left the diplomatic service, devoting himself until 1899 to authorship; he wrote a book on "The Union Between Norway and Sweden." In 1899, he again came into the government's service, having, for some years previous to this, been lecturer on Sociology in the University of Christiania. In 1902, he was a member of the Ministry and in 1903 became Norwegian Minister at Stockholm. It is thus seen that a great part of his early life, like that of his father, was passed abroad.

But Ibsen was too old a hand to change at forty years of age; all of his little personal prides and prejudices had fixed his habits, and he was too much of a piece with Norway to sacrifice the traditions of the North for those of the South. Leaving Rome on May 13, 1868, he went to Florence, and during June, July and August was at Berchtesgaden, in Southern Bavaria. After this, he was to remain in Germany from 1868 to 1891, a period interrupted by two trips to Italy, the one in 1878-79 and the other from 1880 to 1885.

Ibsen's chief source of irritation was the news he received from home; he was chafing under the constant signs of provincialism in Christiania; he was still uttering diatribes against Norwegian coquetry with the Swedes, believing the latter to be "intellectual antagonists," who could not be fused into one, unless some radical change in their nature was brought about; surely, he argued, compatibility could never be reached by half-hearted, ill-founded compromises. To his mind, what the Northern situation needed was some national disaster which would make demands upon the right to exist. Ibsen's contempt for the average in life is marked. These diatribes usually ended in the one remedy which he could think of, having tried it himself. "Go abroad," he exclaims, in a letter to his mother-in-law, "nothing is impossible that one desires with an indomitable will."

He did little more, while in the mountains, than plan out his next play; this was to deal with the elements, which, however incongruous they might be, were, nevertheless, commonly spoken of as "the local

situation."[1] So poorly did these elements really express the true situation that they were as much of a bugbear, taken as a whole, as the Boyg was to Peer Gynt. They were virtually naught but a series of compromises. Ibsen was regarding the political changes very closely, and in a manner he was finding Björnson a typical social barometer. So intently was he watching this figure that his unconscious satirization of Björnson was not realized, even after the furor was raised by the identification of the Liberal Stensgård with his living prototype.

Ibsen was not a party man, though he was much nearer the Conservatives than the Radicals or Liberals, who, as an organization, according to Jæger, based their ideas upon "a sort of romantic nationalism." At this moment, Björnson appeared in Ibsen's eyes as the epitome of all the unwisdom and youthful rashness of the Liberal party; he was championing the rights of the majority, the peasantry; he was an agitator, but not quite so formidable or dangerous as Ibsen imagined. Brandes pictures the genial orator: "I see him standing on the platform at a public meeting, tall and broad-shouldered, towering above thousands of Norwegian peasants, swaying the silent multitude around him by the mighty tones of his voice and his irresistible devotion to the truth,

[1] From Stockholm, on Sept. 3, 1877, Ibsen asked Markus Grönvold to alter an expression in the German version of the play. "You will probably remember that Aslaksen in the play often speaks of 'de lokale forhold'; this, Strodtmann has translated literally, 'lokale Verhältnisse'—which is wrong, because no suggestion of comicality or narrowmindedness is conveyed by this German expression." (See Correspondence, 130.)

greeted by a storm of jubilant homage the moment his voice ceases."

Ibsen could not countenance this wild democracy which was gaining headway; he saw in it a tendency toward socialism, and at that time he was not in sympathy with the peasantry. There was a strong element of the aristocrat in his character, and the sweeping enthusiasm of Björnson was against his nature.[1] Political conditions in Norway were not so marked as to separate the Right and the Left by any immanent gulf; "there were then," writes Jæger, "no strongly contrasted views of life, but merely different attitudes towards one or two of the political questions upon which people are commonly divided." Ibsen's feeling was that of irritation against the so-called Liberal party, and there is no doubt that he regarded Björnson as somewhat of a demagogue.

While spending his vacation in the Salzburg Alps, therefore, Ibsen's mind was centred on these paltry political conditions at home. He began mapping out his play, but did not actually start writing until he

[1] An interesting analysis of Björnson and his Nationalism, which so hurt Ibsen's desire for Scandinavianism, is found in Boyesen's "Essays on Scandinavian Literature." The Liberals were intent on an equality between Norway and Sweden; the Conservatives were regarded as truckling to the King and to Sweden. Boyesen went with Björnson on the political tour of 1873, and the following pen picture is significant:

"Björnson, though he is an evolutionist, is far removed from the philosophic temper in his dealings with the obsolete or obsolescent remnants in political and religious creeds. He has the healthful intolerance of strong conviction. He is too good a partisan to admit that there may be another side to the question which might be worth considering."

reached Dresden. From Munich, however, he wrote to Hegel in September telling him that he was finding pleasure in "this new, *peaceable* work." While in this city he was intent on watching what he termed "the Prussophobia of its inhabitants."

In October, when he finally settled in Dresden, Ibsen again wrote to his publisher reporting on his progress, and giving as the title of the play: "The League of Youth; or, The Almighty & Co.," a facetious name which could, in its latter half, be easily dispensed with. Hegel thought this, and readily obtained Ibsen's consent to call it simply "The League of Youth," "though," added the author, referring to the suppressed phrase, "it could have given offence to no one *who had read the play*."

To Ibsen, the manuscript represented a new artistic elaborateness, because of the medium of prose, in which the tendencies of modern life were discussed. He was evidently striving to make the appeal wider than Norwegian, for he was constantly emphasizing that both in expression and in situation the piece would be just as understandable in Denmark. His hope was to finish the manuscript by the end of the year, but the very fact that it was not published before September 30, 1869, indicates that both the novelty of the subject-matter and the newness of the medium made the actual writing a matter of some difficulty. Furthermore, notwithstanding his efforts to keep the interest general, there is not one of Ibsen's plays more local, more distinctively Norwegian in its cast, than "The League of Youth." The political wrangling cannot possibly have the same meaning for outsiders that more general

ciples and motives would have. When a work of art displays the atmosphere of provincialism, one must know the atmosphere in order to appreciate the provincialism to the full. In America there are, perhaps, certain similar elements in our several "local situations" which would make "The League of Youth" applicable to us in certain directions; under the skin, like Judy O'Grady, politicians are cut from the same piece, and the small local potentate, whatever the locality, is prompted by nearly the same self-interest. For that reason, "The League of Youth" would have its appeal in America.

But the value of the play as a work of art lies only in the evidence throughout of Ibsen's own personality and Ibsen's own artistic and mental growth. He constantly repeated that his simple comedy, while it might seem to portray actual persons, in fact was far from attempting to, although he was of the conviction that dramatists should have models just as well as painters and sculptors. In the matter of construction, he evinced pride over the strong realistic colouring which he obtained through the use of prose; consciously, he had striven to write his dialogue without resorting to long monologues or to the conventional "aside."

The transition from verse to prose was not an easy matter for Ibsen: we have seen that several times before he had made the attempt to change, each time failing. But he understood that the conditions of modern life required this medium, and prose—especially his prose—indicates an amount of polish which he had to gain for himself. "The League of Youth" is the first modern prose comedy of which

Norway can boast; it may thus be considered as an original contribution of Ibsen to the technique of his country, even though in its essentials it is modelled according to the artificial principles of Scribe.

From this time, he was assiduously to cut himself aloof from the panoply of poetry: so completely was he successful in the end, that when the desire seized him to return to the poetic through symbolism, his style became diffuse and unstable, and he found himself out of sympathy with the stark realism of prose, and unfamiliar with his earlier tools of verse. In a letter to the Norwegian actress, Lucie Wolf, sent from Rome on May 25, 1883, Ibsen delivered himself of his views. He had been asked to write a prologue for the Christiania Theatre and he had declined, inasmuch as prologues had now become contrary to his art principles, and he disliked any form of old style declamation; artifice was no longer dramatic art to him. So thoroughly had he been torn from his old moorings as to believe firmly that verse had done more injury than good to drama; were he an actor he would refuse to utter a line of conventional rhythm, but as a dramatist, he could, and he would, persist in declining to perpetuate the form which he believed was fast growing obsolete. Certainly, to his way of thinking, the drama of the immediate future would be prose, and from his narrow reading view, a tragedy in iambic pentameters was as rare as that *rara avis*, the dodo. Two things, probably, Ibsen did not quite realize: first, that his own mastery of prose was establishing a school of drama which would serve as a discouragement to verse; and, second, that there

were, however rare, a few disciples working ardently in the interests of the so-called poetic drama.

But, notwithstanding, prose, to Ibsen, was a cultivated art; it was by far more difficult for him to write "the genuine, plain language spoken in real life," than to produce the formal lines. He was as strongly against the employment of verse, as it was against his nature to write prologues or epilogues which flattered where flattery was least due. It is probable that the publication of "The League of Youth," coupled with Björnson's activity in the political confusion of parties, were both behind the latter as an impetus in his contemporaneous writing. "Bankruptcy" and "The Editor" bear close connection with Ibsen's work.

"The League of Youth" would be an excellent comedy were it not a hybrid product, in which the farce element obtrudes itself. So thoroughly inconsistent and arbitrary is it in its main story that it is most difficult to outline the logical sequence of its plot. Its situations are maintained through a series of misunderstandings which suggest a literary game of puss in the corner, where, in the *finale*, all are mated off save one, around whom the whole sarcastic evidence of the dialogue swirls. There is much in the motivation as well as in the development of character which is not weak because it is on the surface, but which is petty, because it seems to have cut beneath the cuticle of the different persons.

The significance of the play is therefore entirely dependent upon what, separately taken, might be considered the unessentials of the dialogue. In this *respect* it is a step in advance of "Love's Comedy"

in its subtle smallnesses, even as it has the advantage over this play in its very natural use of prose. In its general atmosphere, in its general discussions, it sounds the familiar note of Ibsen's social plays; there is the representative of the old order, and the representative of the new order battering on the doors of tradition; there is the *nouveau riche* with his individualized suburban ideas; there are the several small types in a community which Ibsen took special trouble to cartoon; the politician, the editor, the student, the business man, the doctor,—all are to be found in his *dramatis personæ*.

"The League of Youth" chiefly busies itself with the portraiture of an individual by the name of Stensgård, whose *alias* is Björnson. During the progress of five acts it carries him through excess after excess—a young idealist and egoist whose weakness of character and purpose, whose unguarded enthusiasm and innate conceit keep him torn between the two parties, the old order and the new, with not sufficient will to close all the ways save the consuming one. He is a man readily deceived by others and as readily deceiving himself; he utters cheap words and high-sounding phrases that catch the favour of the crowds; he veers wherever the wind is most propitious to himself, a weathercock of the same order as Peer Gynt, who, when all is told, is not even a good weathercock at that.

This wild fortune-hunter, this seeker after social position, this vainglorious coxcomb is just the species to take hold of a small community, much on the order of Skien in size and in the character of its social grading. Snubbed by the aristocratic Chamberlain

Bratsberg, his is not the nature to leave undiscovered that Monsen, the rich magnate of Stonelee, the parvenu, will serve him well as the first rung of the political ladder. In these initial moments, when Stensgård is being slowly fired with the idea of his League of Youth, Ibsen, by that unerring touch of his, introduces cameo flashes in the printer, Aslaksen, and in Heire, the much abused ne'er-do-well, whose fortune and holdings have, through crafty workings, been taken from him by Bratsberg—Heire, the gossip, the scandal-monger, who says just enough to spread suspicion, and stops just where it is essential for him to proceed further.

There are as many shades, and sudden turns, and quaint sayings, and keen gibes in the dialogue as there are in the real occurrences and situations of life. It all leads up quite naturally, in this introductory act, to Stensgård's ringing speech to the younger generation, hurling denunciation at the aristocrats, meaning in particular the Chamberlain; lauding the masses with the undoubted possibilities in them, deriding the dead and rotten past, and bidding the young men proclaim themselves as the true wealth of the country.

There is a Doctor Fieldbo, who is physician at the Chamberlain's works, and who bears some resemblance to Ibsen himself; he has formerly been Stensgård's friend, but he sees only too clearly how dangerously the current is flowing. Stensgård's great vision of the storm of democracy, before which the rulers of the world are to be scattered to the winds, is dimmed by the matter-of-factness of Fieldbo's interpretation. He sees the motives of Stensgård all too clearly—to

marry Monsen's daughter, and thereby to satisfy his ambition by an alliance which will offer him the money he needs. It is all a general scheming.

The Chamberlain, dense and befuddled by his daughter, Thora, who deceives him into the belief that Stensgård has really attacked his competitor, Monsen, instead of himself, now invites the leader of the newly founded League of Youth to his house; this opens another vista of opportunities to Stensgård; he is carried into the elegance of the Bratsbergs' home, and there becomes fired with the so-called aristocratic ambitions that thrive on luxury and refinement of a purely exterior quality. He gradually turns from Monsen, and pits his youth, his brazen eagerness, against the hoarded smug prejudices of the Chamberlain, who believes in things that run in families.

Stensgård does not know that the Chamberlain has been deceived as to his attack; and in the flattered state that he is in over having been admitted to this house of such local importance, he seeks for an opportunity to apologize to his host. He would now marry Miss Bratsberg, since his eyes are open to the falsity of Monsen, with his underbred instincts. Fieldbo fathoms the meaning of this diplomatic move, but being in love himself with the Chamberlain's daughter, he attempts to dissuade Stensgård from his wild vacillation. He fails to warn the impetuous adventurer how dangerous his game really is; and the latter, now wholly incapable of self-control, rushes headlong into the vortex. His conceit would even lead him to believe that the members of the League of Youth will bow to his superior judgment as to his

swerving from his original purpose. For once, Fieldbo makes Stensgård say what he means. No vague phrases will conceal his real goal—toward Parliament, and thence into the Ministry, there to be maintained by a safe financial marriage. His is surely an apostasy—from the founder of the Young Men's Union to a disciple of "an aristocracy of culture," measured by the traditional proportions of the Bratsberg family. He is after money; he would have been an apt pupil of Bishop Nicholas in his overriding of people, no matter the methods, and irrespective of the consequences. He indulges in a system of petty quarrelling based on a merely childish desire for something he has never had.

This Stensgård is indeed the sort of man to thrive upon mud slinging, and his idea is to make profit, at the same time avoiding being hit himself. Since the Chamberlain seems to think his innuendoes were aimed at Monsen, why then it were best for him to keep the speech as it was originally delivered out of the papers altogether, or else modify his views somewhat. But Aslaksen is one of the typical Ibsen men; secure in his possession of scandal, he also would profit by it. When Stensgård thus realizes himself, however slightly, at bay, he utters the irresponsible cry which measures his anger at being thwarted. In such cases he is always ready to defile pitch with pitch. Aslaksen is the Ibsen type with the large family—which is either a morally or physically tainted household.

The final current to draw Stensgård into the ruinous vortex is the motive prompting Lundestad, an old landowner, who has been in politics, and who *scruples* at nothing in his various endeavours to

further his own ends; he it is who fixes the younger man's eye on the possible attainment of his high political goal. It is a short step from Stensgård's belief in the masses, to his acceptance of the idea that a man of property and power must be outside of this, as a star that dwells apart. Lundestad has a little of Bishop Nicholas in him also; he would stir up friction, undiscovered and subtly; he it is who furthers Stensgård's inclination to apologize to the Chamberlain for his indiscreet speech, knowing full well the effect any discovery of such misunderstanding would have. The man is always on the alert, for fear lest he might be caught in his varied scheming. In fact, taking the characters in their detail, they are a very vividly portrayed band of "climbers," of social parasites.

The outcome of Stensgård's apology, couched in the shape of a fable which contains a play upon the name of Bratsberg—a form of humour which Ibsen in many instances employed—is natural, since it places the Chamberlain in a most silly position. But nothing daunted by the consternation he raises, the vacillating upstart brazens the situation out. He does not half realize Bratsberg's inherited prejudices. The Chamberlain represents that generation of citizens who believe that respect is due them, not because they are active in the common life of the day, but because they are guardians of a traditional integrity which has not been tested, and which, in Ibsen's opinion, should it ever be brought to test, would show a rift in the family bulwark.

This "blot on the escutcheon" he proceeds to prove by involving the Chamberlain's son in the spec-

ulations of Monsen, which are of a shady character. By the father's very narrow guarding of this inherited sense of honour, the son's sense has been atrophied to the extent of forging his name on a bill held by Monsen himself, which later falls into the possession of Stensgård. The news is abroad that some scandal is about to come to a head, and through the usual subterfuge of misunderstanding, Stensgård is battered like a shuttlecock from the daughter of one side to the daughter of the other. Bernard Shaw's use of the farce element is perhaps more satiric than Ibsen's when he falls into absurdities which throw the characters into illogical positions; Ibsen moves his puppets helter skelter, landing effective blows much in the manner of an inexperienced prize fighter [1] who has not yet mastered the science of the conservation of energy. Even a good farce must obey the laws of this principle of reserve, and "The League of Youth" is by no means a good farce.

In Stensgård's untutored belief in his mission, in his representing the wrath of the Lord to be visited upon the Chamberlain provided he is not amenable to his, Stensgård's, avowed love for Thora Bratsberg, we have a reflection of Ibsen's own personal belief and political wrath perverted, no doubt to indicate how far astray to his own mind Björnson's views were from his, however similar their initial impulse.

[1] Brandes writes: "In the ferocity of their satire, Dumas and Sardou now and then remind us of him; Sardou's Rabagas (1871) bears some resemblance to Stensgård in 'The League of Youth' (1869)," Yet in his 1882 "Impression," Brandes declares that "Henrik Ibsen resembles no other living poet, and *he is* influenced by none."

Ibsen always formulates his dramas so that there is a point of contact where either a catastrophe could be averted, or else where it gains headway and explodes. When Monsen, pushed in his investments, attempts to inveigle the Chamberlain into his ventures, when his arrogance is brought side by side with Bratsberg's smugness, which looks down from the supposed security of its social height, the melodrama of Ibsen furnishes Monsen with the implement to destroy his rival's pride; he may talk about his caste, he may try to wash himself clean of the pretensions of Norwegian *parvenus*, but Bratsberg cannot prevent the disgrace which is about to fall upon the traditional honour of his family. The father exhibits all that pride which comes before the proverbial fall, and in the scene which follows, an interesting suggestion occurs.

Ibsen's art never expanded; it concentrated, became more intense, became more reasonable. His ideas would sketch themselves upon his brain, and be brought closer together, focussed, by a process of organic growth. Erik Bratsberg has a wife, and by her actions on the one hand, and by her natural craving on the other, we gain two separate sketches of the psychological stamina underlying Nora in "A Doll's House." Selma enters as the father and son are having a spirited discussion about the latter's finances. She openly rebels, as Nora does later, over being regarded as a doll—she who was ready to make sacrifices never demanded of her, who yearned for a share in her husband's cares; but who, instead, was dressed in gewgaws and allowed no part in the strenuous, vital moments of the family life. These

two points thus suggested by Ibsen kept drawing closer in his mental vision until they assumed the composite of Nora herself many years after. In this vortex of kaleidoscopic life Ibsen carries the plot on to the point of discovering the forgery of young Bratsberg, and of showing the necessity for concealing the theft by the Chamberlain's acknowledging the validity of the signature.

It is difficult to narrate the absurdities of the fourth act; by actual diagram, the course of Stensgård zigzags in frenzied effort to profit by "the local situation." The elections are on, and he is in a fair way of being successful; but a politician without money is of no consequence: Stensgård runs from house to house, not knowing upon which the shadow of financial suspicion rests; then he opens a way, if all else fails, of affixing Madam Rundholmen, keeper of a hotel, who possesses a small income herself which might be of some service to him. The situations that follow are not unlike a grab-bag party where the accidental mixture of several love notes carries them into the wrong hands, so that, during one moment, Stensgård is confronted with the difficulty of being engaged to three persons—or of keeping three proposals open.

No wonder that Fieldbo, *alias* Ibsen and Stensgård, *alias* Björnson, have little sympathy for each other. There are some moods of Stensgård's which might represent Ibsen at his most reckless moments, or during his unguarded hours when he dared to feel and to yearn; it is the sensation which Stensgård expresses by the exclamation: "Oh, a longing comes *over* me at times for exquisite women! I want some-

thing that brings beauty with it." It matters little to him whether Fieldbo considers him dangerous and unscrupulous or whether Lundestad has played with him in order to save the Chamberlain and to undermine his League of Youth—naught of this matters to him provided he remains on top, provided his own skin is saved.

Stensgård represents the prostitution of vital energy; he possesses no foresight, no discretion, no imagination; he is representative of that democracy which, according to Boyesen, Ibsen—like Carlyle—believed to be "the government of fools by fools"; he represents the folly of political hysteria, the excess of the democratic in the midst of a society not ready for it. The younger generation who constitute his league in the beginning are prompted by nothing more than a jubilant exercise of spirits. What a wide difference between Ibsen here as a gay manipulator of a very "ill-made" play after the French style, and "The Master Builder," where the idea of the younger generation bears a more philosophic sense and indicates the spiritual deepening of Ibsen.

The last act of "The League of Youth" is spent in taking account. Bratsberg is shorn of his idols, and makes retribution—falls into the Ibsen habit of renunciation—by relinquishing his title of Chamberlain, which had been given him because of the unblemished honour of generations in his family. But, in the crushing of his pride, he has gained something after all; Fieldbo opens his eyes by showing him the error of his short-sightedness. If no one else knows the true hypocrisy of Stensgård, the Doctor at least arraigns him as a patch-work, a man with gifts or-

half ripe. Fieldbo points him out as one intent "on learning; not on living."

The Chamberlain in this last scene is jocular over his birthday, and will hear naught of the doings of Stensgård, who has, as the final move in his game mailed to Bratsberg the forged note of his son; this, maybe, is the saving grace, and the rehabilitation of his prospects; once more he completely fools the Chamberlain. Ibsen here introduces much satire at the expense of the Liberal party, telling through Lundestad how and why they gain power over the masses. Liberalism is the easiest thing in the world for him who, like Stensgård, owns neither character, conviction nor social position. When, in a community, you have the Chamberlain on one side and the League of Youth on the other, you must perforce resort to the spirit of compromise.

To the very last, it is a game of bluff; Stensgård is defeated with difficulty; he falls back on each of his ways of retreat only to find himself mistaken in his calculation—not knowing what to do. Ibsen resorts to the easiest method of ridding himself of his characters; they pair off in a most mechanical way, indicating how very mechanical was the manipulation of the action. In the end, Lundestad, noting how the stream flows against Stensgård, deserts him, for he realizes that, by crafty manœuvring, he might be able to regain his own hold upon the people. The slender threads are all brought to an end, and nothing is proven save what we knew all along—that the political situation in Norway was in danger of a democratic element which meant more harm to the nation than good. Perhaps it is wrong to use the

word nation at all, since in Ibsen's eyes it stands for "the common people; those who have nothing and are nothing; those who lie chained," and have not the will to break from that which binds them.

Do we obtain here a political preachment or simply an impressionistic ensemble of stray views of Ibsen, welded together by his consuming distrust of an irresponsible democracy threatening Norway at that time? At best we may consider "The League of Youth" as a very creditable exercise in realistic play writing. To Sarolea, it recalls Émile Augier's "Effrontés," and the same critic writes: "Il ne retrouvera plus jamais ce rire franc que l'indignation ne tardera pas à étouffer." The remarkable fact about the play is that it contains so much of the Henrik Ibsen which is distinctive—his surety of dialogue, his directness of character conception, his keen penetration, and his care of the seeming unessentials. If at times he forgets that restraint which individualizes his technique, it is as much the fault of his French influences, as of his lack of concentration. "The League of Youth" is like a preliminary sketch where there is much that is crude and unformed, but where not only are there fine pencil lines which reveal the master stroke, but also every type which afterwards is to be clothed in its proper life proportion. Mr. Archer's acute remarks on this play culminate in his apportionment of excellence: "The third act, though superficially a rather tame interlude between the vigorous second act and the bustling fourth, is in reality the most characteristic of the five. The second act might be signed Augier, and the fourth Labiche; but in the third the coming Ibsen is manifest."

There is a bond of connection between "The League of Youth" and "Pillars of Society"; in both there is evinced Ibsen's view of the moral and social rottenness of the average community; he sees the frailties of the individual, the threatening dangers in the masses, the confining barrier of tradition. Yet in "The League of Youth," however much he might try to maintain the equal balance between the liberal view on the one hand, and the conservative view on the other, his sympathy is instinctively partial to Bratsberg.

In the matter of stimulation, we receive an occasional forward note from Fieldbo, but the cry of independence rings in the person of Selma. Long before "A Doll's House" was written, Dr. Brandes declared that this woman's voice demanding emancipation was but a preliminary for something further. From an impressionistic point of view, Ibsen has nowhere assembled a more perfectly photographed group, but it is not a fixed group—it is moving—it it kinetoscopic. For that very reason, the flicker of its constant change,—indeterminate by reason of its repeated shifting of focal point—detracts from its whole impression. It does not seem to arrive—to reach any satisfactory conclusion—to frame any acceptable political creed.

But though Ibsen intended it for a peaceable work, its reception was far from quiescent. Ibsen missed this initial furor; he was in Egypt at the time, setting sail two days before "The League of Youth" was published. The book was given to the public on September 30,[1] and on the evening of October 18,

[1] The second edition of "The League of Youth," Kbhvn., No-

1869, the first performance occurred in Christiania. The audience was in a divided state; the Conservatives clapped while the Liberals hissed, but the piece proceeded without any violent interruptions. On the second evening, however, at the end of the fourth act, the theatre had to be closed.[1] The wild patriotism of the younger generation declared itself insulted, and Björnson immediately took the brunt of the insult upon himself.

When the news reached Ibsen, it was very satisfying to him; with that easy justification which marked his aloofness, with that almost grandiose manner in which he was wont to hurl his defiance, he sent to Norway (November, 1869) his poem "At Port Saïd."[2]

> "The steamers passed on
> By the obelisk.
> In the language of my home
> Came to me the chatter of news.
> The mirror-poem which I had polished

vember 4, 1869; 3rd edition, December 12, 1874; 4th edition, February 12, 1880; 5th edition, November 22, 1883; 6th edition, December 17, 1895. Among the translations may be mentioned that in French by Pierre Bertrand and Edmond de Nevers (1893), and that in Germany by Adolf Strodtmann (1872). Another German translation was made by Wilhelm Lange. See Halvorsen for its popularity in Norway and its presentation in Copenhagen. It was not received in Germany for some time.

[1] Boyesen recalls a similar fight over Wergeland's "The Campbells."

[2] This translation occurs in Prof. Gosse's biography. See Morgenstern's German translation in volume 1 of the "Sämtliche Werke." A translation is also given by Payne in Jæger's biography.

For masculine minxes
Had been smeared, at home
By splutterings from penny whistles."

This was not the only poem to be written on the subject. Björnson likewise expressed an indignation of a different order in verses penned later to the Liberal leader, Johan Sverdrup.

"Because thy mighty name my song
Shall bear, thou yet wert wholly wrong
To think that onslaught it recalls;
I do not mingle in such brawls.
If poesy's sacred grove be made
The assassin's hiding place, if this
The new poetic fashion is,[1]
Then I for one renounce its shade."

There was more than party feeling roused; the personal spleen resulted in open rupture between Ibsen and Björnson. With his usual imperiousness, which was always backed by premonitions of impending tempests, Ibsen, on his return to Dresden, declared that he would have been quite disappointed had "The League of Youth" been received quietly. Yet on the strength of this belligerent stand, he

[1] Translation found in Payne's edition of Jæger's biography. In 1881, Björnson wrote: "What I called 'assassination' was not the representation of actual circumstances and prominent personages in Norway; it was the attempt of 'The League of Youth' to make of our young party of liberty a troupe of ambitious, phrase-mongering speculators, whose patriotism lay in their phraseology; and more particularly this—that certain characters, after being made recognisable as well-known personages, were given false hearts and bad characters, and placed in positions which they never occupied."

showed irritation that his play was not taken from its æsthetic rather than from its political aspect. "From the attacks which I have read," he wrote in 1870, "one would conclude that phrase-mongering, hollowness, and roguery are regarded in Norway as natural characteristics, which must not be meddled with."

But his surprise was mostly manifested over Björnson's identification of himself with Stensgård. He impulsively declared and sincerely believed that no direct reference was aimed at Björnson. It was "his pernicious and 'lie-steeped' clique, who have served me as models." This explanation did not avail to relieve the strain; the fact of the matter is that the strain had during the years become too great to remedy. Sufficient has already been said to indicate the suspicion which existed between Björnson and Ibsen; everything was tending to pull them asunder—especially the former's enmity towards Brandes, and the latter's growing enthusiasm for Brandes. Just before his departure for Egypt, Ibsen had written to Brandes, with whom Björnson had attempted to re-establish some show of friendship, regarding the overtures: "For him, there exist only two kinds of people: those from whom he can derive some benefit, and those who may be a hindrance to him."

"The League of Youth" widened the breach, but not irretrievably. Ibsen's literary work was always identified with party politics, even though his consuming desire might be to keep on the outside. The Right, up to the time of the appearance of "Ghosts," was attempting to claim his sympathies; they turn

to "Peer Gynt" as satire aimed at the national weakness which the Left displayed; they openly accepted "The League of Youth" as a propagandist pamphlet. It seems assured, by the evidence contained in his various letters, that Ibsen was sincerely trying to maintain a just position toward both parties, although he deplored Björnson's identification with the Norwegian Peasant Left. Was it not a case where Ibsen was criticising the Liberals because they were not liberal in the right direction? Björnson on his part was descending to personalities and was looking upon Ibsen's religious views as "atheistic."

They were both, however, too big of soul to let matters continue thus for long. The years that follow are marked by continued overtures on each side. When the question arose as to the dedication of "The Pretenders," while Ibsen finally decided not to inscribe it to Björnson, he expressed to Hegel his desire for a reconciliation. No anger could blind Björnson to the good in life or to the excellence in a person's work. Though at variance with Brandes, he always paid careful attention to his books, and in the same way, when time came for Ibsen to be championed, on the publication of "Ghosts," Björnson came prominently to the fore. As subtle forces served to draw them together again as those which drew them apart. Their religious views, not founded on theology, but dependent on ethical statement, became more in common. By the winter of 1880-81 they were again on terms of friendly intimacy: Björnson, touring through America, had nearly met death in a railway accident, and Ibsen wrote him in

cordial terms. During his travels the former had said in a lecture:

"I think I have a pretty thorough acquaintance with the dramatic literature of the world, and I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that Henrik Ibsen possesses more dramatic power than any other play-writer of our day."

On Ibsen's part he was trying to be just as gracious; if he was not quite so spontaneous at least he was sincere. After "Ghosts" had been attacked, he wrote:

"The only man in Norway who has frankly, boldly, and generously taken my part is Björnson. It is just like him; he has in truth a great, a kingly soul." And on the latter's jubilee Ibsen, tempered in his views as to the danger of Björnson's liberal tendencies, wrote to him: "My thanks for the work done side by side with me in the service of freedom these twenty-five years."

In fine, it is difficult to say which was more suburban—the spirit of "The League of Youth," or the manner in which it was generally received.

CHAPTER XIII

IBSEN IN AN UNFAMILIAR LIGHT

During the summer of 1869 Ibsen received a travelling grant which afforded him an opportunity of visiting Stockholm in the interests of the Norwegian Government; not only was he to report on the Congress of Orthographists, but likewise upon Swedish art and educational methods. He remained for two months, during which time the feeling manifested for him was markedly cordial. While there he received a letter from his sister Hedvig, who had become the wife of a Captain Stousland, living in Skien, and who was a member of the Lammers community, announcing the death of his mother. The voice struck a chord in his memory which showed him how different was his own life from that at home, how wide the gulf had irretrievably grown; but the sentiment in his nature responded to the gentle words sent him by Hedvig; even though he might not sympathize with her, he could love her and refrain from hurting her in his letters!

He hedged himself around; he fought his battles within himself; he realized that all the efforts which his sister might make to convert him would be in vain. Perhaps he was asking too much for a confidence which on his part he rebelled against strengthening by correspondence or by reciprocal confidence. "So our dear old Mother is dead," he wrote, with some of the peculiarity of Peer Gynt, and there followed his thanks to Hedvig for fulfilling those duties which should have been shared by all of them.

The Khedive of Egypt now requested King Charles XV. to send delegates to the opening of the

Suez Canal,[1] and it was an honour of no inconsiderable proportion for Ibsen to have been selected; he set out, *via* Dresden and Paris, decorated with the Swedish order of the Wasa, and carrying with him many pleasant memories of acquaintances and banquets; the only other home representative to go with him was Professor J. D. C. Lieblein, famed as an Egyptologist. Not only was he fêted by the Khedive, but as one of a large number of guests, was taken up the Nile on a trip which lasted several weeks, and which afforded him an excellent opportunity of gathering material for future sketches; in "Peer Gynt" he had wonderfully imagined the spaciousness of the scene, but now he saw things at close range. Reaching Port Saïd he flung his defiance at Norway over the reception of "The League of Youth."

One of his poems, "Balloon Letter to a Swedish Lady" (1870), bears the impress of this trip to Egypt; but recently there were translated into French some unedited pages from a descriptive account written by Ibsen of his visit to "Abydos,"[2] which reveal him as a master in the art of word painting; effective in every concise, inclusive phrase which he used—impressionistic sketches full of colour and of a sense of due proportion.

It is a mistaken idea which has gained popular credence that Ibsen's sense was dead to natural picturesqueness; this is hardly the fact, although he never applied to his observation the customary conventional

[1] The Canal was opened on November 17, 1869.

[2] See *La Revue*, April, 1908, pp. 295-304, "Abydos." Translated from Norwegian into French by Jacques de Coussarge.

and sentimental methods. Nature meant something more to him than mere beauty of external form; it possessed spiritual meaning; and instead of remaining passively receptive, the inner man was always stirred to reflection.

In rapid strokes he could image a town in the south of Egypt, with its winding streets, and crowded squalor; he could paint, with an almost too sharp outline, the sinking sun, and the shadows of palm trees stretched along the yellow sand—the sunset of absolute peace which creates in one a desire for solitude. With an eye accustomed to draw contrasts between the beautiful and the repulsive, his pencil depicts a Poësque silhouette of two vultures feeding upon the corpse of a camel—and to make it all the more emphatic, his canvas carries the magnificence of a brilliantly lighted horizon, to throw the essentials in relief.

Ibsen's contemplation was generally coloured by the questions of moral right; in the midst of the quiet beauty of an Egyptian night, with the myriad stars above, and the valley of the Nile overhung by a low mist, he watched the gliding barks, with their headlights of red paper, and he heard the song of the boatsmen, in uniform cadence, floating across the water. At these times would his thoughts turn toward home. "During such moments," he adds, "we desire to be reconciled with all men, and we ask ourselves: 'How have you merited seeing all this splendour?'"

His eye for perspective—strictly an artist's quality brought to bear upon his ability to write—is pronounced, giving one a feeling of immense loneliness in the desert, but generally relieved by keen remarks

upon the curious ways of men. He noted the prevailing government and the character of the people —and when in the midst of groups he found himself co-ordinating the many and diverse elements. "An Egyptian café," he writes, "was installed in the ruins of the cloister. The frequenters were seated outside, under a roof made of dried palm branches. A number of people were gathered here; long pipes and long beards predominated; and also long Oriental silences and long European conversations."

Perhaps in his descriptions Ibsen might have been less niggardly with his ornateness, but, on the other hand, where he lost in brilliancy, he certainly gained in incisiveness. The years to come may bring to light much of his prose which, while it will in no way unsettle the estimate of the dramatist, may, at least, add another quality to the authorship of the man. For he saw clearly, even though his observation was filtered through his own personality, and he was endowed with the gift of saying the most in the fewest words.

The struggle Ibsen went through regarding his prose applied entirely to its use in drama. As early as 1858 he was writing small descriptive stories, pregnant with colour and sentiment, and indicating his genius for infusing significance into the commonplace. This was natural for one who at the period was so closely imbued with the romantic spirit. But a few quotations will bear evidence that "The Wedding," written at the outset of Ibsen's career, not only possessed a surety of descriptive power, but contained a freshness which one never associates with him. The homely topic deals with a small boy

who cannot go to church because he lacks the proper Sunday garb, but who, when the pastor's wife makes him a present of a new jacket and shoes and stockings, enters the sacred building where a wedding is taking place. In the following, Ibsen's sombreness had not yet settled upon him:

"It was high up in Voss, on a Sunday morning, shortly before St. John's Day; the whole fair, glorious district lay glittering in the sunshine, which fell slanting over the mountain slopes, and threw long transparent blue shadows into the far-off distance. The lake, which sank in the midst of the valley, gave, when viewed from the mountain road leading inland to Evanger, a curious aspect to all the surrounding country. No breeze was astir, and the steep rocky summits toward the south were reflected in the water which, hardly perceptible to the eye, because of its quiet surface, lay there like a great yawning chasm. Only when a solitary boat on the shady side steered toward the shore could one see that it was only an illusion; . . . the nearer it came to land, the more distinctly audible became the sound of the oars against the locks, and then a long shining furrow of silver would trail behind until the red caps of Voss and the white kerchiefs on the rear benches of the boat came swaying into the sunshine."

Little Knut watches the crowds from a distance, "the light-haired maidens with their silver-mounted books and white kerchiefs, the young lads in the new-fashioned blue jackets, and the old men in long frock coats and yellow knee-breeches, all walked silent across the churchyard and entered the house of God by the large portal which stood wide open, and beck-

oned in so friendly a manner, while through it issued the organ peal and the fragrance of the fresh green branches strewn over the floor in the vestibule."

This small boy, who bears resemblance to another impressionable lad of Skien, with his finger in his mouth—a badge of bashfulness—finally crept into the church, awed by the silence. Ibsen, popularly regarded as unmoved by the tenderness of nature, becomes almost lyrical:

"Outside, the sun dyed the wall in crimson, and the bee hummed about the red climbing roses, while the wind whispered in the tree tops; but inside, all was still and cool and wondrously wide and high. The floor was sprinkled with shimmering white sand, a peculiar atmosphere seemed to permeate the whole place, the light shone through the old red and green window panes, long wavering rays filtering the room. In front of the altar stood the pastor in his black coat—high above the choir door Jesus hung on the cross, while two little angels with wings stood beside Him. An angel, larger than the others, floated from the ceiling, the baptismal font in his hands."

Over Knut there crept the beneficent feeling of youthful exaltation. What he heard he treasured; what he saw of the radiant bride with "cheeks aglow like the blush of dawn," brought to him a holy awakening, though he understood but little. Ibsen, the sentimentalist as he was to the very day of his death, ends the career of Knut, who flowered into an artist, with these words:

"Since then he has seen the wide world, but in his heart he has ever remained a Norwegian—for it is

not easily forgotten—the holy awakening one experiences in the village church at home." [1]

Thus spoke the prophetic Ibsen in 1858. Between the writing of this sketch and that of 1869 there is no material improvement, save that which comes with a deepening insight into the ways of men, and a more perfect understanding of a language subject to confusing change. Therefore when one speaks of Ibsen's new medium of expression, it must be borne in mind that what is meant is dramatic expression. Like all artists, he never gathered together any of his pieces without subjecting them to as close a revision as Tennyson used to give to his own verse—and the effect was just as unerring in its mature finality.[2] Once more settled in Germany, he bethought him of collecting his poems, a task which, while it might keep him from more important work, would hang over him until it was done—and Ibsen was fully conscious that it should be done.

The storm which was brewing over Prussia and which involved the question of German unity, now began to absorb a great part of Ibsen's attention. His conversion from a suspicious regard of the Germans to a warm feeling of love, brought about by living seventeen years among them, is clearly illustrated in

[1] This sketch has been translated into German and may be found in vol. 1 of Brandes, Elias and Schlenther: "Henrik Ibsen's Sämtliche Werke in deutsche Sprache," pp. 424 *seq.* The English translation was made by Miss Francesca F. Strecker.

[2] In respect to this the reader should consult Payne's Jæger, p. 223, where a treatment is given in slight proportion much after the manner of Dr. Henry Van Dyke's consideration of *Tennyson's* revision.

stray references through his letters. To John Grieg, as early as 1866, he said: "It is quite true that I have a strong dislike, not, as you rightly put it, of Germans, but of Germanism and Teutoniana." He recognised the richness of their nature, but he called them "our born enemies."

That he was anxious, however, to be instrumental in bringing about a better understanding, is unmistakable. The Germans have placed their astounding impress upon every phase of intellectual life; nearly every modern movement has emanated from the Germanic mind, and Ibsen, thus early in life, seems to have resented the dependence of the North upon Southern stimulus. Wherever he found any originality of Scandinavian thought he was consumed with a strong desire to bring it before the Germans, and to have it win its way there, as his own work later was to do. In such a vein he wrote to Brandes in 1872, telling how with pride he had heard his lectures discussed at a literary society in Dresden. "Come to Germany," he adds with enthusiasm. "It is abroad that we Scandinavians must win our battles; a victory in Germany, and you will have the upper hand at home."

But Ibsen gave to Germany quite as much as he took; if his philosophy was coloured by German thought, by the German *Kulturkampf*, which is seen to a great extent in "Emperor and Galilean," his own method of dramatic treatment, his own use or application of modern theories and problems in the theatre served to create a realistic school in Germany, of which Sudermann and Hauptmann are the greatest exponents. Ibsen became absorbed in the

spiritual and political crises which were descending upon Germany when he again settled in Dresden during 1870.

They were stirring times for him, he confessed to Hegel; it was impossible for him to concentrate on any work of deep quality; he could only potter about, preparing his poems for the press, and thinking at odd moments of writing an opera libretto on "Sigurd Jorsalafar." "These infernal war disturbances," he writes to Dietrichson, "have a distracting effect upon me."

A slight event now occurred, which indicates how constant was Ibsen's belief in his own efforts representing something national and far-reaching; it was a self-assumption which imposed upon him a certain forced dignity and over-seriousness. The cartoonists ridiculed him for it, but with no avail. In 1870 the "Gyldendalske Boghandel" celebrated its centennial (July 4), and Hegel was forwarded a congratulatory letter as well as a poem; not only did Ibsen send his personal thanks to his publisher for being the turning-point in his fortunes, but through the interest created in Denmark, Ibsen felt that the antagonistic feeling toward him in Norway had been changed. He likewise, as a "state-author," extended to Hegel great appreciation for all that had been done in Denmark for Norwegian literature—an obligation which he for one would always regard as a national debt. Hegel had published the whole of Welhaven's work.[1]

From July until October, Ibsen found himself in Copenhagen, greatly unsettled by the course of

[1] The poem is found in the Elias, Brandes, Schlenther ed.,

events. On July 19, France declared war on Prussia, taking, as one of many excuses for the conflict, the attempt to bestow the Spanish crown upon the Hohenzollern family. The battles that ensued served to weld closer the different factions in Germany. The French disaster at Sedan took place on September 1, and two days after, the Napoleon dynasty was overthrown. The Italians entered Rome on September 20, as one of the moves bringing about Italian unity, which was an important result of the Franco-Prussian war. France was now ruled by "The Government of National Defence," until the so-called social-democrats, encouraged by the unsettled times, assumed control of affairs, and the Paris Commune grew into being.[1]

These were the particular events which drew comment from Ibsen. By October 10, he was again in Dresden, having met with much friendship among the Danes, and having discovered that, despite the extreme tendency of Brandes' criticism, the latter had many adherents. This he wrote to Brandes who was in Rome, adding: "If you are away for a time, so much the better; one always gains by allowing one's self to be missed." The life around him in Germany was at that moment in direct contrast with his summer environment; French prisoners filled the town, there were the wounded to be taken care of,

"Henrik Ibsen's Sämtliche Werke," vol. 1, p. 117: "Nimm den Handschlag aus der Ferne, Meinen Dank in totem Wort!"

From 1887 until 1903, Hegel's son, Jacob, conducted the publishing business alone.

[1] The reader is referred to the very excellent accounts in W[illi]helm Muller's "Political History of Recent Times."

and nearly every household had suffered loss. Still, in the midst of these conditions, Ibsen was gathering his poems, attending to the sales of his books, buying lottery tickets, besides aiding Peter Hansen in the latter's biographical sketch of himself, to be included in "Norwegian Poets of our Century."

In November, 1870, Ibsen wrote to his brother-in-law, giving his impressions of the state of feeling in the barracks near his house. The French soldiers appeared to be enjoying their captivity. Into this, Ibsen read significance:

"The situation in France does not seem to trouble them," he wrote. "All this, however, is perfectly natural in men belonging to a revolutionary nation which lacks proper discipline and control. We Norwegians ought to take a lesson from this; for it is in the direction of exactly such internal disintegration that fellows like Jaabæk [the peasant], Johan Sverdrup [the Liberal leader], etc., [meaning probably Björnson], are trying to draw our nation."

When, in 1865, he was living in Rome, Ibsen's estimate of the people was negative, but he found that despite their lack of a political sense, of a commercial spirit, and their possession of a lethargy which kept them ignorant of much which adds value to life, they, nevertheless, were "indescribably beautiful and sound and calm." With the Italian Government now in Rome, all of this quiet, this feeling of sanctuary would cease to be; in his imperious manner Ibsen declared he would never again visit Rome, where true liberty had heretofore existed, where there had been no tyranny of politics. "For *every statesman*," he deplored, ". . . an artist

will be ruined." But what was more to the point was that liberty, which to the Italian had been a glorious aspiration, would now lose much of its true vigour. "I must confess," he wrote to Brandes, "that the only thing I love about liberty is the struggle for it; I care nothing for the possession of it."

The true Ibsen attitude, however, regarding the status of European politics, is found in the following written to Brandes:

"The old, illusory France has collapsed; and as soon as the new, real Prussia does the same, we shall be with one bound in a new age. How ideas will then come tumbling about our ears! And it is high time they did. Up till now we have been living on nothing but the crumbs from the revolutionary table of the last century, the food out of which all nutriment has long been chewed. The old terms require to have a new meaning infused into them. Liberty, equality, and fraternity are no longer the things they were in the days of the late-lamented guillotine. This is what the politicians will not understand; and therefore I hate them. They want only their own special revolutions—revolutions in externals, in politics, etc. But all this is mere trifling. What is all-important is the revolution of the spirit of man; and in this you will be one of those who lead."

There is no need to quibble over the exact meaning of the word liberty as applied in Ibsen's work; he did not understand it as synonymous with political liberty, nor did he confuse it with any of the freedom which we commonly term license or liberties. "What I call struggle for liberty," he remarke

"is nothing but the constant living assimilation of the idea of freedom." It is the citizen who seeks political liberty; it is the individual who seeks liberty in the true sense. With this view, it is natural that Ibsen should regard the state as the curse of the individual; his opinion was, for example, that the Jewish nation was greater for having no state, than if it had remained concentrated in Palestine. In this sense, that famous remark of Ibsen's, quoted by all anarchists as proving his essential sympathy with them, assumes a different aspect:

"The state must be abolished!" he writes. "In that revolution I will take part. Undermine the idea of the state; make willingness and spiritual kinship the only essentials in the case of a union—and you have the beginning of a liberty that is of some value."

It will profit the student of Ibsen to take these views and place them side by side with Herbert Spencer's social theory, revealing how closely their ideas of revolution through evolution coincided.[1] The latter was more logical, the former more instinctive, but they both reached similar conclusions regarding the making of man. Spencer's view was perhaps more far-reaching because of the faultless logical development, and was always marked by an expressed limitation of "liberties" which Ibsen's comments generally implied.

"Experience occasionally shows," writes Spencer,[2] "that there may arise extreme interest in pursuing

[1] See the *Revue de Paris*, September 1, 1904.

[2] See "System of Synthetic Philosophy," Herbert Spencer.

entirely unselfish ends; and as time goes on, there will be more and more of those whose unselfish end will be the further evolution of Humanity. While contemplating from the heights of thought that far-off life of the race never to be enjoyed by them, but only by a remote posterity, they will feel a calm pleasure in the consciousness of having aided the advance toward it."

Ibsen did not escape being drawn into a slight controversy, due to some opinions of his contained in the "Balloon Letter to a Swedish Lady" and in his "The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln." After the publication of his poems in 1871, a correspondent wrote to a German newspaper, declaring that despite the hospitality enjoyed by Ibsen in Dresden, he had spoken of the Germans in a way the Germans should not countenance. Ibsen's explanation is probably too apologetic to relieve him of the full truth of the accusation. For at the time of the Schleswig-Holstein trouble, his opinion against Germany was undoubtedly coloured by his warmth of feeling for Denmark. Ibsen's accuser also said that in one of his poems he had called Germany "the Land of the Lie." Ibsen's characteristic comment on this emphasized the fact that a poet can hate an Idea, a Principle, a System, but not an Individual. The essential task of the poet, so he once wrote to Brandes, is to see, not to reflect. He did not refer to the German people, but to the political and diplomatic situation which was outside the control of the people, and which he had chastised as vigorously in his own country as abroad. The weak spot in the public accusation of Ibsen rested in his correspond-

ent taking a poem of 1865 as an example of outraged hospitality extended to Ibsen in 1871. It is a fact, however, that Ibsen's regard for Germany and the Germans only began to increase after having dwelt for some time among them. In 1885, while in Munich, he told Brandes: "I feel quite at home here, much more so than in my own home."

Ibsen did not find the task of preparing his poems for the press a pleasurable one;[1] he did not relish what he termed the accursed business of going over once again all the points of view which he had done with forever. It made little difference if Mr. Lökke, the schoolmaster, offered to collect the varied assortment; through his own changed spirit they had to be wrung again. The impatience which seized him was partly due to his desire to begin anew on "Emperor Julian," and yet he was kept to the task

[1] The "Poems" of Ibsen were published in 1871; 2d ed., 1875; 3rd ed., 1879; 4th ed., 1882; 5th ed., 1886; 6th ed., 1891; 7th ed., 1896. German translations were made by L. Passarge in 1881 and by Dr. Hermann Neumann in 1886. In the Brandes, Elias, Schlenther edition, the translations are made by Emma Klingenfeld, Ludwig Fulda, Max Bamberger and Christian Morgenstern. A French translation has been done by le Vicomte de Colleville and F. de Zepelin. Individual French translations are contained in *La Nouvelle Revue*, July 15, 1895, p. 314 (Gustav Kahm); *Le Magazin International*, 1896; E. Tissot's "Le Drame Norvégien," 1893; *Revue Blanche* (A. Matthey), July 15, 1897. English comment and translations found in Boyesen, Jæger, Gosse, and particularly Wicksteed. See article by Boyesen, "Henrik Ibsen's Poems," *Cosmopolitan*, 15:90. In Halvorsen, the English reader will find no difficulty in obtaining further references. The sixty-four titles recorded by Halvorsen represent poems, some of which were written much later than 1871 and added in subsequent edition.

through the never-varying belief that everything written by himself had weight as autobiographic data. On May 3, 1871, the book appeared.

According to the Halvorsen bibliography—and the German edition of the poems accords therewith —sixty-four separate titles represent the complete verse of Henrik Ibsen, other than the juvenile productions commented upon in earlier chapters. A consideration of them may not long detain us; the characteristics of the poems manifest themselves in the plays—political indignation; the personal note is continually sounded, and now and again the lyrical song contains grace. Many of the verses celebrate occasions, while others, more or less reflective, represent a personal distrust of himself.

It is almost a matter of repetition to outline the main thoughts underlying these individual verses. Some of the doubt of "The Pretenders" finds its way into "Bird and Bird Catcher"; some of the renunciation of "Brand" is detected in the landscape philosophy of "In the Mountains." The light airiness of "Love's Comedy" breathes through "Complications," with a similar stream of satire permeating the lines; while "A Letter in Rhyme" contains the real significance in Ibsen's persistent and pessimistic questioning.

In this latter poem he *does* overcome his aversion to answering questions, but he replies in a gruesome manner, connecting the superstitious fear of sailors when a corpse is aboard with the inertia of the world with its many corpses aboard, which only retard the full, healthy growth of civilization. It is with these corpses that Ibsen drives home the moral and ethic

import in his social and sexual dramas. Note to what uses he puts inheritance in "A Doll's House" and "Ghosts"; follow his ideas of marriage in "Rosmersholm" and "The Lady from the Sea." It is small wonder that the present generation is restless to lift this dead weight from its soul.

"The Miner" and "Afraid of the Light" both indicate Ibsen's faith that even in the midst of darkness, the light may eventually find its way. This thought is repeated in "Brand," whereas "On the Heights" has all the essentials of "Peer Gynt," the same inconsequence, the same external picture, the same battle with the cynical "other self," the same personal loss. In his poems Ibsen is intensely serious; occasionally such bits of verse as the love-song in "The Feast at Solhaug" and Margrete's Cradle-song in "The Pretenders" break the sombreness with lightsome grace; once or twice he becomes popular, as, in the melodramatic story of "Terje Vigen," the sailor with the thirst for revenge, yet with the saving Ibsen trait of the Power of Memory which cleanses the heart and mind. He possesses the moral if not the philosophic weight of Wordsworth; in rare instances they both exhibit a similar irritation, although Ibsen's indignation is better grounded and certainly more tempestuous. There is even something of Wordsworth's simple treatment in the narrative of "Terje Vigen."

Ibsen's contemplation of his own growth is emphasized in "Architectural Schemes" and "The Power of Memory," while in the latter piece he pictures his own crucifixion which led, as "The Eider Duck" suggests, to his flight southward. What

that flight meant to him is commented upon in letters and in verse. On July 18, 1872, he wrote his "Millennial Ode,"[1] in which he expressed himself strongly:

"My folk, that gave me in deep shoals the wholesome, bitter, strengthening drink, wherefrom, standing on the brink of my grave as a poet, I received strength for the fight amidst the broken lights of daily life,—my folk that reached me the exile's staff, the burden of sorrow and the swift shoes of care, the sad and solemn equipment for my journey,—home from the world I send thee back a greeting—send it with thanks for all thy gifts, with thanks for the cleansing tide of every anguish. For each plant that has thriven in the garden of my calling stands rooted deep in those same times. If here it shoot in fulness, wealth and joy, it owes it to the grey blasts blowing in the North. What sunshine loosened, mists made firm! Have thanks, my land—thy gift to me was best. Yea! there where the mists roll over the rock-peaks, where the blasts smite bleak upon the Vidde, where echoing silence reigns over hut and hill, where between farm and farm stretches the waste, thither I gaze like the pilot from the deck-bridge. At night and in my poems I belong to home."

Ibsen's personality becomes the web and woof of these poems; he draws upon his experience, upon his contemplation; he puts into them his pugnaciousness, his independence, his deep-rooted opinions, which are oftentimes more suited to prose than to verse. But Ibsen was constant in his belief that, no matter how severe the scourge, goodness would come

[1] This was written on the occasion of the celebration of Norway's unification. I use Wicksteed's translation.

of it; this it was which sustained him through the darkest hour, and so, when we detect him flaunting a nation's ill-treatment as a benefit to himself, we can the better comprehend the further defiance which bid his detractors alter their ways toward him, since he would assuredly persist in holding his own opinion of them.

Further light is thrown on the so-called anarchistic tendencies of Ibsen in his poem: "To my Friend, the Revolutionary Orator":[1]

> "I grow conservative? Friend, you astound me!
> I am the same as ever you found me.
> To move the chessmen—what does that avail you?
> Knock the game in a heap—then I shall not fail you.
> Of all revolutions, but one I cherish,
> Which was not flimsy and amateurish,
> That purged the world for a while of iniquity;
> I refer of course to the flood of antiquity.
> But then, too, was Lucifer tricked by a traitor;
> Noah outwitted him, turning dictator.
> Try it next time more thoroughly; mind not the shriekers;
> But for that we need workers—both fighters and speakers.
> *You* raise the wild flood till it rage and roar fearfully;
> *I* will place 'neath the ark the torpedo, most cheerfully."

There was not a play of his that did not represent something of such an explosion; his satisfaction over the reception of "Love's Comedy" and of "The League of Youth" evinced that, but his greatest torpedo, as Mr. Archer has said, was to be "Ghosts."

The festive spirit often prompted Ibsen to write poetry, but the geniality became tempered by his consuming seriousness. His love poems usually have a heartache in them; his nature poems are moved by

[1] I use here Professor Boyesen's translation.

the world-sorrow which he felt so deeply. The petals of the water lily lay upon the breast which is likened to a mountain tarn in its varying moods. Even the glint of sunshine in "A Bird Ballad" contains the "pleasurable" pang of parting. Ibsen had a poetic inclination to ponder over the association of places.

The foreshadowing and repetition of attitudes are likewise to be noted in these poems. In the grateful recognition given to his wife throughout the verses entitled "Thanks," there occurs the iteration of feminine dependence which Agnes accepts in "Brand," but which Selma Bratsberg and Nora rebel against in later dramas. "Her goal," says Ibsen, referring to his wife's services, "is to kindle my sight into glow."

Altogether, should the verses ever be adequately rendered in English translation, they will do little toward adding to the conception of Ibsen which the dramas afford. They are autobiographically suggestive, inasmuch as a poet through the medium of his verse can become more intimate with himself. His poems are marked by a humour which is grim, which brings little with it of a cheerful nature; they are devoid of free imagery, of unconscious inspiration. Ibsen's claims as a poet rest upon "The Pretenders," "Brand," and "Peer Gynt." There is a deal of weight to these smaller isolated pieces, but there is scarcely any of the universal import or application. While his verses contain personal interest, they are not the product which proclaims Ibsen to be the poet. To those who would see in the social dramas only the scientist and the sociologist; to those who would seek in the sexual plays only the genetic psychologist;

and, finally, to those who are consumed by the symbol within the symbol of his later dramas, to those who constitute the Ibsen "cult,"—there still remains open the way of the poet. And this way is not to be found in the shorter verse, but in the longer dramas.

CHAPTER XIV

EMPEROR AND GALILEAN

After Frederick Van Eeden, the Dutch reformer, had paid his first visit to America in the early part of 1908, he published his impressions in a short magazine article, treating our national youthfulness under the guise of "the ugly duckling" legend; our faults, so he believed, were juvenile defects, "a remnant of the boy and the barbarian;" our hope lay in the fact that as a nation America was *alive*. Possibly we were as yet uncertain of the benefit this being alive would bring to Society, the Nation, and the Race; as yet the active force was ill-directed, but it was there, and where there is movement there can be no sloth or indifference. His commandment to America was couched in these words:

"Keep alive, in the widest sense, meaning also to keep free from all sorts of deadening and petrifying conventions, systems, dogmas, churches and beliefs, be they religious, scientific or philosophical."[1]

This is the invigorating effect that Ibsen has upon the reader who understands him; but there must be no half-way acceptance; he will have no pity for the sensitiveness that thrives upon protection; he applies the scourge to others as he applied it to himself. His philosophical outlook upon life was still in an uncertain stage of formation; he had tried hard in "Brand" and in "Peer Gynt" to reconcile certain elements in the accomplishment of one's mission, but both the positive and the negative poles had ended in annihilation. In the course of his writing "Emperor

[1] "Impressions of America." Frederick Van Eeden. *The Independent*, August 13, 1908, pp. 370-374.

and Galilean," his formulation assumed a more definite shape. Having once satisfied himself of the necessity to reconcile opposites, he then, in his social dramas, pointed to concrete weaknesses which were retarding the accomplishment of that "third empire."

The publication of his poems left Ibsen free to throw his whole attention upon Emperor Julian, his longest work and one upon which he may be said to have been engaged from 1871 to 1873, unless we trace the whole evolution from 1864, when, it will be remembered, he was voted a grant to aid him in finishing his drama based on Roman history. A complete record of the evolution may be drawn from the Ibsen letters, which in themselves afford a skeleton foundation rather than an illuminating background for an estimate of the drama's content.[1]

We have seen the effect which the "blessed peace" of Rome had had upon Ibsen when he first arrived there in 1864; we have satisfied ourselves that little of that civilization of the past which lay about him in picturesque remnants entered into the imagery of "Brand" or "Peer Gynt," but there is no doubt that the mental stimulus of being in a Roman atmos-

[1] Since the present book is a record, as well as attempting to be a commentary, I am perforce obliged to enter fully into Ibsen's correspondence relating to "Emperor and Galilean." Otherwise I should refer the reader to Mr. Archer's excellent introduction which, in part, covers the same ground. See also "Ibsen's Imperialism," by the same author, in *Nineteenth Century and After*, February, 1907. Extracts from Ibsen's commonplace book are to be found in *Die Neue Rundschau*, December, 1906. It is of interest to note that "Emperor and Galilean" was the first of Ibsen's plays to be translated (by Miss Ray) into English.

phere must have served to turn his thoughts upon "Julianus Apostata." He entered upon a serious contemplation of the subject with joy sufficiently strong to prompt him to write Björnson on September 16 [17],[1] that the work would be completed in the Summer of 1865. This was not to be the case, for as yet Ibsen had not the mental growth sufficient to clear his ideas for him. His way must lead through other channels.

A considerable period elapsed, his attention meanwhile being absorbed in the composition of "Brand." Then there occurred the announcement in Denmark of Carsten Hauch's "Julian the Apostate," which in no way deterred Ibsen in his intentions, according to a letter to Michael Birkeland, May 4, 1866 [28]. For, as he wrote Hegel on May 21 [30], his treatment of the subject would be unlike that of Hauch's; in fact, he would take special precautions not to read or to become familiar in any way with the latter's drama.

On July 22 [23], he refers vaguely in a letter to Botten-Hansen, written from his perch in Frascati, 2,000 feet above the sea, to a subject over which he is wrestling in the hopes of getting "the upper hand of the brute before long." So editors assume that this means the "Emperor Julian," though the actual and immediate result was "Peer Gynt." This is the last reference from Rome, unless we except an extract from one of Ibsen's speeches delivered as late as 1898, in which he refers to the influence of the South upon him at a time when "Julianus Apostata" was rife in its initial enthusiastic planning:[2]

[1] The bracketted numbers refer to Ibsen's correspondence.

[2] See Brandes, Elias, Schlenther ed., vol. 1, p. 531: "Beim

"It is now thirty-four years since I journeyed southward by way of Germany and Austria, and passed through the Alps on May 9. Over the mountains the clouds hung like a great dark curtain. We plunged in under it, steamed through the tunnel, and suddenly found ourselves at Miramare, where the beauty of the South, a strange luminosity, shining like white marble, suddenly revealed itself to me, and left its mark on my whole subsequent production, even though it may not all have taken the form of beauty."

He knew much about the evangelism of the Lammers' community in Skien; he saw around him evidences of a crumbling civilization which had been based on paganism; he himself was burning with anger over the petty sluggishness of the world's will; a fermenting doubt was gripping him. The study of an Apostate would, therefore, probably give to Ibsen satisfactory understanding of what might be called a threatened apostasy on his part—for aloofness of spirit means denial.

Ibsen was living in Dresden when the next mention of "Emperor Julian" occurs. He tells Hegel on June 10, 1869 [55], that his conceptions are growing distinct and that he should like to have a three-part article on Julian, by Listov. In the communication to Peter Hansen, dated October 28 [74], among the varied estimates of his plays, one sees linked closely to his opinion that "The League of Youth" is suggestive of sausage and beer, the other opinion

Bankett im 'Hôtel d' Angleterre' zu Kopenhagen," 1 April, 1898. See the note given by the German editors. I quote Archer's translation.

that in Dresden there is a community "well-ordered even to weariness" and that his salvation, which lay in remoteness of subject, was to be found only in "Emperor Julian."

By January 10, 1871 [78], he announced to Hegel that the First Part was completed, while he seems to have determined to divide his material into three sections. On July 12 [82] Ibsen was writing enthusiastically to Hegel, proclaiming "Emperor Julian" his chief work, in which critics would obtain his positive theory of life. He asked further for Danish reference which would give him facts concerning the period; he possessed Neander and D. Strauss on the subject, but he was not eager for "argumentative folly."

A significant passage occurs in a letter to Brandes, dated September 24 [84]: "In the course of my occupation with Julian," he said, "I have in a way become a fatalist; and yet this play will be a kind of banner. Do not fear, however, any underlying purpose; I study the characters, the conflicting plans, the *history*, and do not concern myself with the *moral* of the whole—always assuming that by the moral of history you do not mean its philosophy; for that *that* will clearly shine forth, as the final verdict on the struggle and the victory, is a matter of course. But all this can be made intelligible by practical application." Hegel learned on December 27, 1871 [86], that the first part of the play, in three acts, and called "Julian and the Philosophers," was in "fair copy," and that he was writing rapidly. With critical enthusiasm Ibsen compared the style to that of "The Pretenders."

He had nearly completed the Second Part when he wrote Hegel on April 24, 1872 [92], and he claimed that the Third Part would go quickly, inasmuch as he always worked better in warm weather. His desire to thrash over th[illegible] conversation with Brandes is seen [illegible] 31 [94], in which he exhibits his [illegible] of discussing in letters things whic[illegible] kept for personal meeting. He was liter[illegible]ing with "Julian," and from Berchtesgaden, in[illegible]varia, on July 23 [96], he declared to Brandes [illegible]t he would be glad to contribute letters to the latte[illegible] contemplated periodical—letters which "would, in a manner, form my confession of faith—just as soon as Julian, the monster, lets hold his grip."

By August 8, 1872 [97],[1] Ibsen made the formal announcement to Hegel that he had finished the second part, "Julian's Apostasy," in three acts, and that the final section, which would be entitled "Julian on the Imperial Throne," in five acts, would shortly be ready, since he had read so widely in preparation. Here, for the first time, is contained the suggestion that he might publish the parts now finished, as separate from the third, since they would form a complete whole. However, for the sake of general impression, he advised otherwise. Probably Brandes had made some suggestion of the kind, as he was to do later on regarding "Emperor and Galilean."

Ibsen's desire to finish the work before the close of 1872 was expressed in a letter to Gosse, October 14 [99]. "I hope it will meet with your approval," he said. "It is a part of my own spiritual life which I

[1] Mention of the drama is also made in Letter 98.

am putting into this book; what I depict I have, under different conditions, gone through myself; and the historical subject chosen has a much more intimate connection with the movements of our own time than one might at first imagine. The establishment of such a connection, I regard as imperative in any modern poetical treatment of such a remote subject, if it is to arouse interest at all."

With his customary dependence upon his friends, it is not surprising to note that on February 4, 1873 [100], Ibsen was communicating with Ludvig Daae regarding the proper manner of writing Greek names; his questions are indicative of certain formal care, while his further queries relating to a life of Maximus and his critical references to Ammianus are evidences of his continued study. We shall see that his drama might have been saved from an overweight, had he done less preparation in the way of facts. The superiority of the first over the second part of "Emperor and Galilean" confirms this opinion.

The task, which was so many times to have been completed shortly, continued to engross his attention. It was not the mere writing, he confessed to Hegel on February 6 [101], which troubled him, but the effort to revivify in his own mind "an age so remote from our own and so little akin to it." Another letter to Daae, sent on February 23 [103], volleys question after question relative to philology whereby he could "Scandinavise" Greek. He had now evidently determined upon a play of two instead of three parts, in which is recorded "a struggle between two irreconcilable powers in the life of the world—a struggle

which will always repeat itself; and because of this universality, I call the book 'A World Drama.'"

The inner life of Julian, so he declared, expressed much of his own spiritual experience, indeed more than he cared to have the general reader know; yet he did not claim that it was not a realistic drama; the characters are pictured in direct relation with their age. In closing his letter to Daae, Ibsen, with a distinctive grace, added: "Good bye! I shall never forget your readiness to help me in this matter."

He now heard that Björnson had spoken of his atheistical views that were to be infused into this new piece. Ibsen's resentment over this unjust inference is indicated in his letter of September 8 [107] to Brandes. He brushed the accusation aside with the comment: "What the book is or is not I have no desire to enquire into; I only know that I saw a fragment of the history of humanity plainly before my eyes, and that I tried to reproduce exactly what I saw."

On October 16 [109], Ibsen expressed hope that Brandes would be among the first to see his colossal drama. When it reached Gosse, the latter showed regret that he had abandoned the use of verse; to which Ibsen replied on January 15, 1874 [110], in terms consistent with his previous utterances. He wrote:

"The play is, as you must have observed, conceived in the most realistic style. . . . I wished to produce the impression on the reader that what he was reading was something that had really happened." Verse would have defeated his object, reducing all is ordinary characters to the level of identically the

same rhythmical measure. "We are no longer living in the days of Shakespeare," he continued. "Among sculptors there is already talk of painting statues in the natural colours. I have no desire to see the Venus of Milo painted, but I would rather see the head of a negro executed in black than in white marble." His tragedy thus renounced the tradition of ancient law and form; he wished to arrive at the human in his execution.

George Brandes and his brother were editors in 1874 of a magazine called "The Nineteenth Century," to which the former contributed an article on "Emperor and Galilean," emphasizing that, by his "determinism," Ibsen's drama was enfeebled. Ibsen took him up on the point in a communication of January 30, 1875 [115]; with petulance, he could not see why, if Brandes attacked him for this weakness, he should not likewise have taken exception to Paul Heyse, of whom Brandes had also written, and who was marked by similar characteristics. "It comes to the same thing," he declared, "whether I say, in writing of a person's character, 'it runs in his blood,' or, 'he is free—subject to the laws of necessity.'"

In that letter also Ibsen has a paragraph significant of his idea of the "third kingdom," apropos of Brandes' magazine, which, aiming to be Scandinavian, was too evidently Danish.

"Why do you and all of us, whose standpoint is a European one, occupy such an isolated position at home?—Because what we belong to," he answers himself, "is not an entire, coherent state-organism; because the people at home think parochially, feel parochially, and regard everything from a parochial a

not from a national or Scandinavian point of view." But though the completion of "Emperor and Galilean" served to increase the pressure of belief in the necessity for unity of national ideas, "Only entire nations," he asserted, "can join in great intellectual movements. A change in the theory of life and of the world is not a parochial matter; and we Scandinavians, as compared with the other European nations, have not yet gone beyond the parish-council standpoint. And do you ever find a parish-council looking for and proposing the way for 'the third kingdom'?" The fault which we shall find with Julian rests in the very failure on his part to reconcile those various elements around him, which retarded his imperialism on one hand, and which strengthened Christianity on the other.

An illuminating remark was made by Ibsen while in Stockholm on September 24, 1887.[1] He had often been called a pessimist, he confessed, simply because he could not believe in the eternity of human ideals. But still he did not sanction the obliteration of the effects of transitory ideals, and, in consequence, he needs must regard himself as an optimist; he held that ideals should grow "from more to more." Each ideal that passed to a higher one, so he was convinced, brought the world nearer the goal of the "third empire," which comprised the central theme of his double drama. "Therefore," he proclaimed in ringing tones, "let me drain my glass to the growing, the coming time." The sincerity is true gold, not the hollow dross of Stensgård's euphemistic phrases.

[1] See "Beim Fest im 'Grand Hotel' zu Stockholm." German Brandes, Elias, Schlenther, vol. 1, p. 527.

There are but two other references to "Emperor and Galilean" in Ibsen's correspondence. From Munich, on February 26, 1888 [198], he wrote to Julius Hoffory, who was instrumental in making him known through Germany; in this letter he stated that during his early stay in Rome, while he was turning over in his mind the details of the Julian drama, his views of life were "too Scandinavian and nationalistic" to attempt such an alien subject. "Emperor and Galilean" therefore crystallized under German intellectual influences, which found active expression in the historical happenings of the time. The forces were transforming him, and his nationalism was being changed into a racial theory —probably, as he said, not so much changed as expanded. It was after this alteration in himself that he felt impelled to complete his drama.

As late as July, 1899, Ibsen was receiving enquiries regarding the composition of "Emperor and Galilean." Woerner, who was engaged in the preparation of his long Ibsen treatise, consulted him in regard to his sources; he had read extensively if not deeply in Ecclesiastical history, relying chiefly for his facts upon Ammianus Marcellinus.[1]

The chief advantage in thus letting Ibsen trace the evolution of his play is to be found in the inevitable conclusion which results. "Emperor and Galilean" may be regarded from two points of view; as a chronicle play of uneven but tremendous proportions, and as a culmination of the views only vaguely expressed and only partly formulated in "Brand" and "Peer Gynt." From his remarks, we

[1] He was unfortunately cut off from reading Gibbon.



see that Ibsen felt a vital change in his outlook upon spiritual matters; having once satisfied himself as to the spiritual formula upon which to work, having once accepted the philosophy of the "third empire," he set forth in his social plays to point to that in the social order of things which was retarding the accomplishment. From now on, his philosophy was not materially to change; it was to deepen and to mingle subtly with his moral, ethical and social views. The difference between the idea of "the younger generation" in "The League of Youth" and in "The Master Builder" measures the growth.[1]

Note also that instead of being iconoclastic and atheistical in his belief, Ibsen, while accepting wholly no definite religious principles, nevertheless proceeded to analyze existent theories, and to draw from them what would accord with the modern movement. But that in its proper place!

A thesis of some vital proportions might be written, in which Ibsen's use of historical and philosophical

[1] "Emperor and Galilean" was published on October 17, 1873; 2nd ed., Kbhvn, December 16, 1873; 3rd ed., Kbhvn, June 3, 1880; 4th ed., Kbhvn, June 23, 1892. An English translation was made by Catherine Ray in 1876, followed by the Archer version in 1890. In France, Ch. de Casanove published a translation during 1895. (See *Revue Bleue*, 1894, I.) Two German translations are to be recorded, one by Ernst Brausewetter (1888) and the other by Paul Herrmann (1888). Scandinavian commentaries are many, the most famous being that by A. Garborg (1873). See Halvorsen. The play has been used in fragments, most notably at the Stadt-theatre in Leipzig, December 5, 1896; March 17, 1898, in Berlin at the Belle Alliance Theatre, with Herr Wiecke as Julian. According to Huneker, it was given in its entirety on March 20, 1903, at the National Theatre in Christiania.

material was analyzed step by step; the pursuance of such a method would involve extended research, for the literature covering the Apostasy of the Emperor Julian is an extensive one, and the conflicting elements, while characteristic of the particular time, have, nevertheless, been repeated throughout the world's progress in thought, and, to-day are at the foundation of modern philosophy.

But here it is only essential to regard the subject from its general aspects; the incidents are not so much in themselves as they are sidelights upon that deflection of faith through which the Emperor Julian passed. Apart from whether or not Ibsen's treatment was historically just, the reader, after finishing the two parts, cannot fail to be impressed by the skilful grading of his apostasy, every motive being considered and accounted for in some way.

To gain a satisfactory impression of the figures, it would seem advisable to do some slight preparatory reading of history;[1] then one will see that while intent

[1] No book is better fitted for the purpose than Gaetano Negri's "Julian the Apostate," in two volumes, translated by Duchess Litta-Visconti-Arese, and with an introduction by Prof. Pasquale Villari (London, Unwin). The apostasy and the conditions affecting it are considered at length. The introduction contains bibliographical data. Further references are Randall's "The Emperor Julian" (1889); Alice Gardner's "Julian, Philosopher and Emperor" (1899); Kock's "Kaiser Julian, seine Jugend und Kriegsthaten" (1900); Vollert's "Kaiser Julians religiose und philosophische Uberzeugung" (1899). In France, I note Paul Allard's "Julien l'Apostat" (1899). I am indebted to Dr. E. E. Slosson for his suggestions contained in an article, "A Russian Mystic Novelist" [Dmitri Mérejkowski]. *The Independent*, Nov. 15, 1906.

Ibsen called his play a "World-Drama," but wrote to Hegel

Platonism contained a tendency to weakness in the very fact that while it retained the ancient gods, these divinities were shorn of their majesty and were used merely as symbols.

"Julian's attempt," continues the same authority, "awakens great interest, just because he endeavoured to oppose to Christianity the ancient gods of the Hellenic Olympus, on the basis of a philosophy which was, in fact, essentially identical with that of Christianity." Instead of reducing Christianity, his attempt was to raise paganism to the same level. The aptness of Julian's efforts, therefore, lay, as Negri declares, in Hellenic Neo-Platonism containing a certain idealistic quality which, at this period, appears to have forsaken Christianity.[1] Ibsen's mistake in "The Emperor Julian" is chiefly evident in his ignoring the high moral significance in the man's attitude; he conceived him, in this second part, more nearly in terms of Constantius.

The opportuneness of Julian's attempted restoration of paganism rested in the sectarian warfare in the ranks of Christianity and in the evident corruption permeating Christian society. Of necessity, his early education had had much to do with his inclination toward Hellenic culture.

Negri enters minutely into a discussion of Julian's attitude, based on a consideration of his works; he

[1] Boyesen calls attention to literary analogies in the treatment of this struggle between Christianity and Paganism. See Schiller's "The Gods of Greece," and Swinburne's "Hymn to Proserpine," "The Garden of Proserpine" (William Morton Payne's excellent "Selected Poems of Swinburne" [*Belles-Lettres* Series. Heath]).

traces, step by step, Julian's action against Christianity as well as his final disillusion. Instead of being a reactionary, Julian was progressive. I quote Negri: "He . . . upheld polytheism, into which he introduced that culture and that civilization [of the ancients], but, by upholding it, he Christianized it, not only under the aspec metaphysics, but also, as we shall see, under th morals and discipline. The attempt to Christia polytheism so as to keep it alive could only be appreci d by those who shared Julian's love for that assemb ge of tradition, glory, and poetry which he designated under the comprehensive title of Hellenism." His weapon against Judaism was that the God of the Jews is not the God of the human race, but of a small nation.

The law of necessity, however, protected Christianity; had polytheism been capable of change, Negri points out that the other religion would not have thriven. In Ibsen's drama, we find in the end that the attempted establishment of paganism was the one thing that strengthened Christianity, since excess of enjoyment and force, which marked polytheism, encouraged a reaction. Ibsen's error was in attributing to Julian certain persecutions which he would never have countenanced.

We shall not here show at any length the liberties taken by Ibsen in the use of historical data;[1] we know the method by his earlier plays, and a dramatist is justified in selecting and adjusting as he would; so

[1] In Mr. Archer's carefully prepared introduction to "Emperor and Galilean," the reader is referred to a resumé of ulian's hatred of Christianity—p. xix. For further analysis, *sult* Lothar's "Henrik Ibsen," chap. viii. For a suggestion

systematically, however, has Ibsen traced this progressive character, that one might easily take a life of Julian and verify, as Mr. Archer has partly done, the authenticity of situations. It is not historical accuracy which a poet should strive to maintain, but the accuracy of character, the accuracy of spirit.

A dramatist must be just to his figures; once he has selected his hero, he is bound to the laws which shaped the destiny of the man. And so, in view of this, we finish "Cæsar's Apostasy" with a feeling that here we have the true proportions of Julian. One must either treat Ibsen's details in the mass, or write an historical analysis; and it is exactly in the mass that "The Emperor Julian" underestimates the largeness and noble proportions of the man. History does not claim that Julian was devoid of consuming defects, petty prejudices and unwise actions, but it does not record the bloody outrages which Ibsen indicates. It is while he is most faithful to history that Ibsen is most dull, drawing from sources rather than from mental assimilation. Save as an exceptional example of the chronicle play, which in a way fulfilled the cry of Hettner for a more psychological treatment, the piece in its exterior mould need detain us no further; around Julian as the central figure there swirl all the motives likely to act and react on his character; here and there passages from his own works are deftly interwoven with the dialogue, and throughout there is a scenic sweep, an effective

of the historical variations Mr. Archer's indications will suffice. Archer's translation of "Emperor and Galilean," including his introduction, is reviewed in *The Nation* (New York) 85:477, November 21, 1907.



handling of crowds not unworthy of "Julius Cæsar" or "Coriolanus." Granting the deviation from historical truth, the apostasy is traced with exceptional skill. I like that conception of the critic who wrote that Ibsen's "Emperor and Galilean" reminded him of a large canvas wholly sketched in, but only here and there worked up minutely; moreover one clearly understands the other critical statement that in the dialogue there are many examples of rich purple patches.

In the first act of "Cæsar's Apostasy" we are given a glimpse of Julian in the midst of the Christianized court of Constantius; he is longing for solitude, he is questioning his unbelief, his apparent blindness. Even thus early he hears it whispered by his boyhood friend that he may be the Emperor's successor. Evidences of his zealous work in Christian conversion are around him, yet despite this, there is a fascination for him in the teachings of Libanius. There is a confusion of inclination in his dealings with the numberless teachers who come in contact with him.

But when he is confronted by this philosopher of paganism, he hears further what is ordained of him. The Emperor protects Julian's faith. Rightly does Libanius question this in the vein of "The Pretenders." "Has this young man so scant faith in his faith?" Julian is hemmed in; the palace stifles him, the Church dissatisfies him; Emperor and Galilean thus early begin to oppose each other. Perhaps the Christians are more jealous of their faith than zealous; they take every means to deceive Julian, and by deceiving to guard his faith from outside *influences*. Libanius sees in Julian, the God-born,

"the uncreated in the ever-changing," the centre of evolution which always progresses toward a higher goal, the possible mean between two extremes of the worldly and the spiritual—not a compromise in the "Peer Gynt" sense, but more philosophic. If Julian has premonitions of the fight ahead of him, they are purely the dreams of a philosopher.

When he at last succeeds in escaping the court and the immediate suspicion of the Emperor, Julian slips to Athens, where we are presented with the philosophic development of his growing pagan tastes. But here, the young Prince does not find the full-blooded belief he seeks; he discovers that even Libanius strives to avoid the battle between the world's truth and God's truth; he is not great because he no longer *suffers wrong;* his views are all formal—as much dogmatized as Christianity.

The so-called Christians rule harshly; even Julian's brother is deeply dyed in sin; his duty, therefore, should be to fight fearlessly as a champion of Christian truth. In this second act, Julian is torn between the compensating aspects of life. Paganism is full of the beauty of revel, but it cannot be reconciled with truth. He is also torn by the imposed idea that he is to save Christendom; his uncertainty is clothed in a mist of the philosophy characterizing the schools. Where is Christianity? Should it not be in life rather than in books? He does not seek the written truth which may be recited without reaching the heart; he is after the living truth! Christ would not countenance the religion practised in His name; on the other hand, from Athens Julian has learned that the old pagan harmony is absent. As he claims:

"The old beauty is no longer beautiful, and the new truth is no longer true." Is it that we need a new revelation of Christ, or is it that the revelation will be something new in itself?

The third act is filled with mysticism. Prince Julian's home in Ephesus is the abode of potent sign and symbol. He [illegible] by the Emperor, but succeeds in evading [illegible] et slowly he is being initiated into the [illegible] new teacher, Maximus. Julian can reduce [illegible] ly to spirit, paying tribute, as Maximus does, [illegible] e law-giver of Sinai and to the seer of Nazareth. [illegible] philosophical status is now couched in the postu[illegible], "that which is, is not; and that which is not, is."

Julian's keen perception, and his being absolutely outside worldly consideration, naturally tend to make him an enthusiast; he cannot believe in that Christian principle which leads through death to the beyond; he would pierce the mystery here and now. "That which is to come," he says, "shall be conceived rather in the soul than in the body." Those pure Adams of successive generations, Moses, Alexander, Jesus, all succumbed to physical weakness; but something new is to arrive. There is the way of the schools and the way of the Church, but is there not a third way?

Mystic orgies now completely engross Julian; Maximus is the conjurer. Strange voices tell him that he is born to serve the spirit—his mission to establish the empire by the way of freedom. The way of freedom is the way of necessity, and naught is gained except by willing, by exerting the power which one *must* exert. Then is Julian told by Maximus of *the constitution* of the three empires; already have

we had two—that founded on the tree of knowledge and that founded on the Cross. But he adds: "The third is the empire of the great mystery; that empire which shall be founded on the tree of knowledge and the tree of the Cross together, because it hates and loves them both, and because it has living sources under Adam's grove and under Golgotha."

This mystic foreshadowing is here interrupted by Julian's unexpected promotion to Cæsar, because of the murder of his brother; Ibsen mixes in his brain the confusion of imperial purple with the spiritual purpose. Voices have whispered that he shall establish an empire; here he has been summoned by the Emperor to do so. The wheels are set rolling along paths far different from those frequented by the lover of wisdom.

The growing idea of kingship becomes uppermost in the mind of Julian; in the fourth act, which is laid in Gaul, events conduce toward that end. For wherever he has gone with the Emperor's army, he has been victorious against the Germans; but in no way does he succeed, by his services, in allaying the hate and suspicion of Constantius toward him. His wife tempts him to usurp the royal prerogative. Has he not been misrepresented at court; has not the Emperor in his report of the campaigns taken to his own credit the brilliant manœuvres of Julian?

The entire spirit of suspicion develops in the Cæsar a crafty and sarcastic streak; he is being gradually drawn into making a bold move in self-defence; the army is with him, but every command he receives from the Emperor only serves to antagonize his generals, to abrogate his promises to the

soldiers. In a way, Julian works advantageously upon the feelings of his friends; and so, when he is at last accepted as Emperor, he covers up a certain ambition under the guise of compulsion.

In the fifth act, the final steps in Julian's apostasy are taken; his philosophy is now weakened by the inclination toward superstition. Whatever misgivings he may have had regarding his usurpation are overcome, one by one, before a realization of imperative duty. Julian's conscience, in other words, is active; that is why he envies the Greek sense of freedom, where the gods are far away.

His reasoning is sophistical when he soothes his misgivings by asserting that it is better for Constantius to suffer wrong than to do wrong. Far down, in subterranean vaults, in the darkness, Julian seeks light; he is looking for signs, while above, the army grows restive.

Julian's life has been spent in dread of two terrors, the Emperor and Christ. In the Sermon on the Mount, the unconditional, inexorable commands have sapped one side of nature. "All that is human has become unlawful since the day when the Seer of Galilee became ruler of the world. Through Him, life has become death." The soul is bound in chains; doctrine has grown into enchantment. There is a terror in the revelation, yet one who has tasted of Christian sweetness can stand no transplanting in other soil. The creed is a benumbing one; it is no spur to ambition.

Surely, by this method of analysis, it is natural that one must either be a thrall under the Christian terror or a monarch in pagan joy. The path to the

throne is over the Galilean. The Christian Fathers have succumbed to worldly temptation. The closing of the play is melodramatic, but powerful and effective. Julian at last has decided; his interpretation of the Lord's Prayer pits paganism against Christ. "Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory," chants the Choir. "Mine is the kingdom," proclaims Julian; thus imperialism overrides the initial impulse. Ibsen, the playwright, is effective, but, as the historian, he loses perspective.

The impression one receives from "The Emperor Julian" is that Ibsen has closely availed himself of the philosophy of books, rather than exhibited any originality; there are three postulates for him to establish: that Julian's imperialism leads to persecution and to the unbalancing of his intellect; that his zeal for paganism and his jealous regard for the power Christ exerts, prompt him into the excessive folly of claiming Godhead himself; and finally that the healthiest scourge Christianity could have had at the time, the most salient awakening, was this very opposition.

A man in such a frame of mind as Julian, would unerringly pass from religious tolerance into intolerance. During these years, for every outrage he committed, there was an outrage done by the Galileans in the name of Christ. If, however, Julian imposes upon himself the task of rooting out error, and if Christian worship is error, then Christianity must be rooted out. He will be friends with those who do not thwart him; his vainglory increases; he is almost thrust into excesses.

He is now a pagan to the full, wearing, like Eilert

Lövborg, vine-leaves in his hair; but he chafes over the continued faith of the Christians; the more he thinks upon it, the less does he understand the gulf that separates the Nazarene from himself. He countenances persecutions with subtle excuses; if he punishes, it is n[illegible] to protect the gods from insult. I[illegible] people who crowd about him, Julian[illegible]s of the Dialectics; he argues out lou[illegible]faction; oftentimes this is very wearison[illegible]e feel that plethora of material has made[illegible]horic; he has not practiced the art of conce[illegible]n; he has become diffuse in his scenes, a[illegible]history rather than a drama. Externalizing the pageantry, one is impressed with his vivid eye for stage grouping; there is almost barbaric splendour in the scenes, so directly in contrast with the spare tension and simple externals of "Ghosts." The character of his material predetermined this lavishness, but it suggests an inclination on Ibsen's part to allow poetic imagination full sway. This is not dramatic, but pictorial.

Julian is feared, but he is likewise defied by Christian enthusiasm; there is no hesitation on the part of the Galileans as to whether they shall choose Christ or the Emperor; the former is in their hearts, the latter is outside. Julian is cursed, and in his rage against this Son of God, he determines to close the churches. He loses his manhood in these excesses; he grows effeminate; his conceit is blinding; he tends from the worship of the gods to the worship of himself.

The Christians are sustained in their martyrdom; spirit of God enters into their hearts. But to

Julian, the contest, according to Ibsen, is not founded upon the philosophic consideration of whether Emperor or Galilean is right. Julian lays all stress upon the idea of might. What though Christ's altars are desecrated, and His Word prohibited, that is the mere external. No longer is Julian zealous of the gods' welfare, he is jealous of his own imperial power.

In many of his untoward actions, such as the attempt to re-establish the temple of Jerusalem, Julian is fulfilling the prophecy of Christ; by his excesses, he shakes his subjects in their loyalty toward him. The Emperor begins to lose ground; he begins to doubt his ability to re-establish paganism. Supposing he gather together the parts of which the old religion is composed, will there not be missing "the divine perfection of bygone beauty?" For the concept of Christ is in the world; He lives despite that Christians die. Can there be a reconciliation between Emperor and Galilean?

The Bible saith: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." It is evident now that in defeat, Julian seeks reconciliation. "Who is the right man?" asks the Emperor, echoing the question found in "The Pretenders"; and Maximus answers: "He who shall swallow up both Emperor and Galilean." They shall succumb, not perish; they shall be put in the casting ladle together, and from the mixture will be evolved the ruler of the "third empire."

There are three stages in this progress; we have the child in paganism, the youth in Christianity, and maturity in the Overman, as Nietzsche terms him.[1]

[1] Nietzsche was influenced by Hellenic thought, Kant, Scho-

God-Emperor, Emperor-God; the balance of flesh and spirit. Logos in Pan, Pan in Logos, says the mystic Maximus. A point of discord among the early Christians was contained in the use of this word Logos, which meant the rational principle of creation and manifestation. To quote Negri: "The idea of the divine person[illegible]t had received its definite sanction on [illegible]which the two conceptions of Christ and the [illegible]gos' were blended together." The philosop[illegible]e "third empire" will become manifest in the m[illegible]ho wills. Wholly discouraged, Julian determine[illegible]at he must possess the world, even if he cannot co[illegible]r the spirit.

The historical close of Julian's career is bound up in his move against the Persians. The danger to which he has tended all along is now imminent—a matter of hero-worship. On this principle of God-Emperor, Emperor-God, mayhap he, Julian, is part of Him whom he has persecuted. Maximus believes in him who is to come, in the free necessity, in the twin-sided one who will bridge the empires now at war. Evolution involves the law of perpetuation.

penhauer, Darwin, Spencer, Haeckel. Mérejkowski points out that Nietszche merely continued scientific deductions, applying them to questions of sociology and universal history. "Man to him is not the end, the last link of the chain, but only one of the links of cosmic progress." With recollections of the beast in himself, man denies that he is the last goal, but "a mere temporary bridge thrown across the chasm between the pre-human and the superhuman." See "Tolstoi as Man and Artist." Dmitri Mérejkowski (Putnam); also the same author's "The Death of the Gods," in the final chapter of which Ibsen's attitude proclaims Mérejkowski as a disciple. The same tendency is to be found in Shaw's "Man and Superman."

The reaction now occurs; after Julian claims that in himself the Messiah lives, he tries even to rule over the natural elements; he is guided by frenzy; the impotence of the gods turns him against them; the fervour of the Christian martyrs draws him toward them. After all, there must be something in a faith of this tenacity. The last act is a great mixture of stray glints of philosophy; there is mention of the Schopenhauer world-will; there is the philosophical statement of perpetuation, of continual evolution. What is death? Julian queries, when he lies wounded by the Persian's shaft.[1] "'Tis naught but paying our debt to the ever changing empire of the dust." When Julian dies, he does not reveal the spirit of repentance. The world-will, according to Maximus, will care for his soul. "To will is to have to will." Julian was a victim of necessity, he was a rod of chastisement, he was *forced* to err.

In this "third empire" will be realized the present watch-word of revolt. This is Ibsen's belief; this is the modern note. In "The Spirit of Modern Philosophy," [2] Professor Royce refers to Ibsen's exposition of the "third empire." "I do not feel these words . . ." he writes, "to be more than merely suggestive. I do not pretend to find in them anything final. But I cannot do better, as I try to give here some faint notion of the vast historical process whereof all this reflective philosophy forms so sub-

[1] History believes he was stricken down by one of his own men.

[2] "Spirit of Modern Philosophy," Josiah Royce. Houghton. Read therein "Lecture on Optimism, Pessimism, and the Moral Order."

ordinate a part, than to point out that the third realm, of which Ibsen so mystically speaks, the realm where a rigid order of nature shall be one with the most miraculously significant divine truth, where Cæsar shall become spiritual, and God an earthly ruler, is precisely the realm which not so much our philosophy but our age, whose echo this philosophy is, is even now seeking to comprehend and with prophetic voice to proclaim."

It is not our province here to enter into a philosophical statement as to the permanence of Ibsen's ideas. He simply placed himself in the main current of modern thought and was carried along by it. Schopenhauer, Hegel, the theory of Evolution—he was under their spell. His views are not original; they have an historical foundation and were furthered by others. The original note in "Emperor and Galilean" was his broadening in a political sense; his empire was extending over the borders of national unity; he wished a world-empire as he wished a world-spirit. Both had to be accomplished before the "third empire" could be attained. Had Julian unified the conflicting elements in the life around him, disaster would not have come so rapidly; he is neither fully Emperor nor fully pagan; he disseminates his energies over a vast area, thus committing, according to Ibsen, as great an error in his way as Peer Gynt and Brand did in theirs.

Into the realm of philosophy Ibsen carries his plea for the whole man and not the fragment; in Julian's break with Christianity, there is some of his old restiveness as to the lie which permeates the code accepted by all of us. In this respect, there is a satiric

glow felt somewhere. Julian was no more the Overman than Skule was the King; he made a miss-step when he retrograded to what had served its day. As Wicksteed rightly observes: "You cannot go back to *recover* infancy; you must go forward to *preserve* both it and youth, transfigured and embraced in manhood. Thus decisively is the reactionary solution of social and religious problems rejected." It is this forward note, this vigorous proclamation that, of necessity, something better is ahead of us provided we lay aside the obstructions which check the healthy growth, that places Ibsen at the opposite pole from the decadent school. He deals essentially with live problems.

Does this play represent a statement of Ibsen's creed or does it simply afford us evidences of his social hope? It is very clear that he was seeking a positive conception of the universe. Had it been written at white heat, it might have been more dramatic and less rhetorical, but it could not more emphatically have proclaimed Ibsen prophesying a new social order, where man would be freed of hypocrisy and the corroding customs veiled beneath. He herein satisfied himself that the philosophic dualism was subject to evolution on both of its sides.

Furthermore, German unity was proclaimed on January 1, 1871, and Ibsen's opinions, as they bore upon Imperialism, were undergoing a change. There must be something more than a political unity; he was not one to believe in half-way reform; he was wondering whether this national zeal around him was a great way toward the realization of his "third kingdom." "Emperor and Galilean" is the crest of

Ibsen's philosophical bent. From now on he was to prove, socially and psychologically, the elements working for and against the "new order." One cannot dodge the issues of life—Peer Gynt was evidence of that; nor can one thrust forward the cruel dictates of one's personal determination—Brand pointed to that. One cannot superimpose the past upon the present and expect success. The philosophy outlined by "Emperor and Galilean" does not demand the stoicism of Brand, it will not admit the lying of Peer, it will not countenance retrogression. "It is significant of Ibsen's mental attitude," writes Brandes, "that in both his treatments of religious subjects, struggle and strife are made much more prominent, and are dealt with far more felicitously than reconciliation and harmony."

While Ibsen never had the satisfaction of bringing the critical world around to his opinion as to the unqualified merits of "Emperor and Galilean," its position in the complete work of the dramatist is of vast importance. It cannot be regarded from the drama standpoint, though the scene-painting is striking; it is no addition to philosophy since it is an instinctive, one might almost say an untutored, grasp of the modern trend (which fact does not detract from, but only adds to, his remarkable vision). It is, however, the keystone to the Ibsen curve of meaning.

CHAPTER XV

A MODERN JOSHUA

During the time that he was writing "Emperor and Galilean," Ibsen was not allowing himself to be disturbed by many external events; he persistently denied himself to extensive company. In the early part of 1871 his letters indicate increasing desire to meet Brandes, since in correspondence he refused to enter into lengthy discussions. "You philosophers," he argued, "can reason black into white"; therefore, he would not allow himself "to be reduced . . . to a stone or a cock."

That he could write with a certain dash is exemplified in his letter of March 2, 1871, addressed to Lorentz Dietrichson; there is a devil-may-care mood welling up in Ibsen, at which time he is almost jocular, free with his "carissimos," affectionate in his messages, and letting slip the cloak of reserve and overseriousness.

But even in correspondence, Ibsen found relief in talking to Brandes; he felt a certain stimulation consequent upon the manner in which he was criticised by his friend. Brandes detected large flaws in Ibsen's education; he was quite aware of Ibsen's failure to realize fully the scientific standpoint of the day. And it was not Ibsen's wish to overcome his intuitive understanding; he believed that a man was born into the world endowed with certain mental qualifications which stamped his age. This *a posteriori* attitude subjects his scientific use, for instance, of heredity, to adverse criticism.

The long-talked-of meeting between Brandes and Ibsen occurred in July, 1871, when the former was

returning from Rome to Denmark, and stopped over in Dresden. Ibsen discovered in him those moods, those questionings, which had swept and were still sweeping over him. The two spent what were later referred to as festive hours. In conversation, Ibsen found the same quality in Brandes that he found in his letters. "What you write," he declared on September 24, 1871, "comes to me like a cry of distress from one who has been left the sole survivor in some great tract where all other life is extinct."

Ibsen's temper was now to flare up suddenly in righteous wrath. There was a printer in Christiania, named Jensen, who had recently published a pirated edition of "The Vikings at Helgeland," and was preparing to issue "Lady Inger." The matter was taken up by the press, and Jensen was compelled by the courts to pay a fine and to destroy his "stock." But Ibsen's manner of dealing with the individual himself was peremptory. "If you dare to persist in your intention," he wrote, "I shall show you, both in the columns of the newspapers and in open court, what the consequences of such rascality are."

This experience led to his friends taking the matter into consideration. Evidently Michael Birkeland had put a restraining hand upon his just ire, for, writing on October 10, 1871, Ibsen thanked him for preventing a lengthy altercation with Jensen; he had to be careful what he, personally, said in Norway, though he never restricted himself in what he proclaimed about Norway. "From Sweden, from Denmark, and from Germany, I hear nothing but what gives me pleasure; it is from Norway," he confessed, "that *everything* bad comes upon me. What do the people

want? Am I not far enough away?" Ibsen's anger was a peculiar mixture of reason and prejudice. He called Jensen "a dirty scoundrel, who, by virtue of his dirtiness, belongs to 'the people;'" and because he was a member of this class, Ibsen, the aristocrat, considered him fit only for his scorn. If Jensen were given sympathy in Norway, Ibsen had determined to sever all ties completely, nevermore to return.[1]

It is natural, therefore, first, that during these years in Dresden, Norwegian visitors should be scant in their attentions, and second, that Ibsen's "Millennial Ode," sent "home" in July, 1872, should ring with such defiance. Indeed, so fearful were the officials in Norway as to the effect these verses would have in Christiania, that they caused handbills containing the piece to be distributed, instead of having it read aloud.

Toward the beginning of 1872, Ibsen applied to the Norwegian Ecclesiastical Department for another grant. In the petition, he emphasized the expenses imposed upon him by his official visit to Egypt,[2] where he had, to an extent, to act up to the pretensions of being rich. He laid stress upon the opportunities he had been given to study Egyptian art, and to visit the galleries in Paris. What he now wished to do was to study at the Berlin Egyptological Museum, in

[1] This matter of copyright in Norway came up again in 1881. See Ibsen's letter to Berner [151], written from Rome, March 27, 1881, discussing the lack of proper protection, and the prospects for international copyright.

[2] For example, Ibsen did not regard his being decorated by the Khedive either as a personal honour or as recognition for his "Peer Gynt," part of which was laid in Egypt. The honour was purely official recognition of Norway

order to reach a fuller comprehension of the relations that existed between Egyptian art and other allied European arts. There were no results from this petition.

Had Ibsen returned to Scandinavia during the summer of 1872, he would doubtless have met Gosse, but "Emperor and Galilean" kept him closely confined. Some of the spirit of his drama entered the correspondence of this time. Julian would have accorded with what he wrote to Brandes on April 4: "Dear friend, the Liberals are freedom's worst enemies. Freedom of thought and spirit thrive best under Absolutism; this was shown in France, afterwards in Germany, and now we see it in Russia."

This summer of 1872, however, was spent roaming in Bohemia and elsewhere in Austria. During July and August, the Ibsen family was in Berchtesgaden, Bavaria, where they had previously stopped in 1868 on their way from Italy. However much of a poet he might wish to be, affairs at home would not allow him to forget for an instant his task as state satirist. But whereas, heretofore, he had burned with his sarcasm, now he was to smite with the hand of a modern Joshua. The action of Norway regarding his festival poem raised his indignation, for it was another sign of the weakness of men incapable of wielding power. "I will shame them," cried Ibsen; "I see their passiveness, I understand their compromises." "It would require a superhuman effort of self-denial," he wrote to his brother-in-law, "to let such material for epigrams and comedies slip through one's fingers." Ibsen's alternate dealing with poetry and prose is thus significant; his indignation rose at intervals as

did his philosophic reasoning. His genius was now to see-saw between these two aspects of his nature. Four years were to elapse, nevertheless, before "Pillars of Society" was finished.

All this time, Ibsen had the satisfaction of watching the growing recognition of his work; Hegel was issuing edition after edition, which was a fair indication that he was being heeded; Gosse, in England, was preparing the way for Archer's campaign, while Strodtmann, in Germany, was translating many of his plays. In the spring of 1873 he came in contact with John Stuart Mill's "Utilitarianism," through the translation of Brandes; he turned from it with a slighting comment on its "sage-like philistinism"; he could not see the scientific viewpoint in it. "'Things,'" so he said to Brandes, "are surely not all kinds of fortuitous occurrences," and to him, Mill had attempted to frame laws from such occurrences. In this letter of April 30th to Brandes, I find the only direct reference to the philosopher, Hegel, which leads me to believe that he must have been reading philosophy as assiduously, while finishing "Emperor and Galilean," as he was the Bible, during the composition of "Brand."

While he was in Pillnitz during the summer, he sent Hegel information of his having received the decoration of the Knight of St. Olaf at the time of the accession of Oscar II; he also described the fatiguing effect upon him while serving as a juror at the Vienna Exhibition where he not only represented the interests of Norway, but also of Denmark, an added duty which afforded him immense satisfaction. Out of the exhibition, Ibsen gleaned some no

tion of artistic elements underlying the civilization of that period. He believed in the invigorating effect contact with the world of art had, and for that reason he suggested[1] that the art societies should advance money on the canvases of a few of the most promising Norwegian painters, in order that they might reap the advantages of coming to Vienna at such a time. In the fall of this year, he was speaking with dread, as he had often done in the past years, of a visit to Norway; he was doubtful whether he could fit himself in with the conditions there; he feared the outcome, and was even contemplating a residence in Rome. If the world could only move progressively and simultaneously! This was what most concerned him, for to his mind, the Scandinavians were slow in recognising certain European advances, which Brandes was, all the while, emphasizing in his essays.

This year found Ibsen making every effort to gain the enthusiasm of Josephson, of the Christiania Theatre, over the version of "Peer Gynt" for which Grieg was preparing a musical score, and he was scolding Brandes for his "Copenhagen particularism," dominant in the latter's *Danish* magazine. The latter topic must have been talked over thoroughly when Brandes came to Dresden in June, 1874. Ibsen now braved the situation, and returned home, not having set foot on Norwegian soil for ten years. Everywhere he received warm welcome, and the Uni-

ity students on the afternoon of September 10th fore him in procession, with banners flying.

[1] tter [106] to the *Morgenblad* editor, dated Vienna, 73.

Before this assemblage Ibsen delivered himself of a speech,[1] and on the evening of the same day witnessed a performance of "The League of Youth." He went away much satisfied with such a reception; to the men from the University he sounded the trumpet of fearlessness. Call me a poet if you will, he seemed to say, but now I know my mission. "It was a long time before my eyes were opened to the real fact," were his actual words, "that poetizing is essentially seeing." So rare were Ibsen's festive feelings that he used constantly to recall the few social gatherings of the kind given him in Christiania. Perhaps these honours emphasized to him a certain importance which might attach to the approaching twenty-fifth anniversary of his literary career, which he wished to mark by a new edition of "Catilina."

He was now contemplating a move to Munich, where Sigurd might profit by the educational system there existing; besides which, he was beginning to grow restive. Ibsen was of a roving disposition. At this time, he wrote in a vein characteristic of the effect produced upon him by his voluntary exile. "It is a pity that at Munich I shall be farther away from home; but to make up for this I shall be nearer to Italy; and I shall also have the advantage of living among Catholics, who, in Germany, are decidedly to be preferred to Protestants." Early in February he was suggesting to Josephson the possibility of their taking an excursion together during the summer through the region of the Tyrol.

In May, 1875, he and his family were settled in

[1] Autobiographically, this speech is significant. See Brandes, Elias, Schlenther German ed., vol. 1, p. 520.



Munich; his household had been decreased in number by the death of his wife's sister, who had lived with them for some years. According to the German editors of the Ibsen letters, he now found time to contribute to Brandes' magazine a couple of rhymed letters entitled "Far Away" and "The Corpse in the Hold"; these formed a part of his scheme outlined to Brandes, to give in verse his opinions of the important intellectual movements of the day.

He was now much engaged in his business affairs; the "Peer Gynt" production was in preparation; he was watching closely the royalties which were paid, or which should be paid to him; here and there he was investing money in shares, and borrowing money for further speculation on the security of bonds. As a crowning event to all this external success, he went to Berlin during June, 1876, in order to attend a special performance of "The Pretenders," staged by the Court Theatrical Company of the Duke of Meiningen. The affair was a brilliant one and Ibsen was applauded to the echo; so much so, indeed, that he was forced to take several curtain calls. As though these honours were not sufficient, the dramatist was invited to the Duke's castle, where, after a short stay, he was sent on his journey homeward, bedecked with the Cross of the First Class of the "Sächsisch-Ernestinische Hausorden." He then joined his family in the Tyrol, where, among the mountain scenes, he could wait the outcome of his further success in Germany with "The Pretenders" and "The Vikings."

In the meantime he had begun on his new work in
t. As early as September 16, 1875, he told

Brandes that he was concentrating on the piece, and by October 23, he had nearly completed the first act. Ibsen always, from now on, waited and watched for the psychological moment to announce his dramas; he told Hegel that he thought advance talk always helped to increase sales, and from this period it is well to note the entrance of Henrik Ibsen, the man of affairs. Gosse describes, on the authority of Molbech, who came into conflict with Ibsen about this time, the change that took place in the outward garb of the poet; the velveteen jacket of poetical days was discarded for the frock coat, squeezed across the chest—presenting a pompous figure, accentuated by the peculiar cut of hair and whiskers, and the spectacles. Here is the Ibsen known to the world.

This acquirement of the practical atmosphere did not add an agreeable characteristic to Ibsen; his speculations and calculations were so keen that he might almost be accused of penuriousness. He now watched the money markets and showed unusual insight concerning the opportuneness of the book trade;[1] there was a certain show of hard and close-fisted politeness in his transactions; he was prompt in all his dealings, but he was inclined to be exacting of others. This, to an extent was unavoidable, considering the state of book and theatre copyright in Europe.

Ibsen regarded "Pillars of Society"[2] as a complement of "The League of Youth"; however, it was to deal with more important problems. In a letter to

[1] See letter 131, to Edward Fallesen.

[2] Mr. Archer analyzes the use of the title, "Pillars of Society," as a translation of the original "Samfundets Stotter."

Hegel on October 23, 1875, three points are to be noted; his mental scenario was couched in five acts, but the finished play indicates the playwright's natural inclination to condense; he always found the first act of a drama the most difficult to do; and finally his intention was to complete the play immediately. It was not until July, 1877, that the "fair" copy was ready for Hegel.

Varied minor incidents point to Ibsen's growing popularity: financial favour, while it hardened him in some respects, did not find him cold to the wants of others; he was soliciting theatre passes for Josephson; nor was he forgetful of his own initial struggles, in the case of John Paulsen, for whom he made appeal to the Government twice in succession for a grant with final good results. Norway was at last obliging him, however indirectly. The summer of 1876 was again spent in the Tyrol, and for the first time business matters were allowed to step between Ibsen and the writing of a play—"Pillars of Society."

The year 1877 brought Ibsen the further honour of a degree of Doctor of Philosophy, as a mark of recognition from the University of Upsala. During April he made a move into new quarters, settling down to steady work on his play, which was now nearing completion. Every day he spent some time with the novelist Paul Heyse and others at a restaurant [Achatz]; and attended besides weekly meetings of a literary club known as "The Crocodile." He was a constant source of wonder to his friends, as he was to the youths of the apothecary shop, for during the day he could work unremittingly, and afterward, ith no show of fatigue, sit far into the night dispens-

ing his views on all matters of interest. This vitality remained constant until a few years before his death.

On October 11, 1877, "Pillars of Society" was published;[1] and Ibsen had the unbounded satisfac-

[1] The immediate popularity of "Pillars of Society" is clearly indicated by the fact that the second edition was issued by Hegel on November 30, 1877. The 3rd ed. appeared, Kbhvn, June 1, 1893. The translations have been extensive; in 1888 Mr. Archer's English version was included in the "Camelot Series," under the general editorship of Ernest Rhys; the volume was preceded by an introduction from the pen of Havelock Ellis. Previously, according to Halvorsen, the word "Quicksands" had been attached to the original title. In 1893, Pierre Bertrand and Edmond de Nevers completed a version in French; two Italian translations are recorded, by Prof. Paolo Rindler with Enrico Polese Santarnecchi (1892), and Bice Savini (1897). German translations have been made by Emil Jonas (1878), Emma Klingenfeld (1878), Wilhelm Lange (1878), G. Morgenstern (1891), Helmine Fick (1897). For other versions consult the Halvorsen bibliography. Among commentaries noted may be mentioned: *Contemporary Review*, vol. 56, 1889 (Robert Buchanan); *The Quarterly Review*, vol. 172, 1891; *Revue d'Art dramatique*, Nov., 1890 (Ch. de Casanove); *Revue Bleue*, 1896, II, 60 (J. du Tillet).

On November 18, 1877, the play was produced in Copenhagen, and on November 30 in Bergen. The month following, on the 13th, it was seen in Stockholm, while in Gothenburg it was produced in February, 1878. Not until March, 1879, did it reach Christiania. It was acted many times in Germany during 1878, at no less than five Berlin theatres, for example, within a fortnight. Thereafter it was constantly given on the German stage. "Pillars of Society" was the first Ibsen play to make its mark in the English theatre; it was presented at the London Gaiety on December 15, 1880. Mr. Archer records additional performances at the Opera Comique Theatre in 1889 and by the Stage Society (Strand Theatre), May, 1901. In Paris, during July, 1896, Lugné-Poë and l'Œuvre company appeared in the piece. In America, several New York pro-

tion of noting that the theatres in all three Scandinavian countries were eagerly waiting to present it. Indeed, so impatient was Fallesen, director of the Copenhagen Theatre Royal, that he brushed aside a play already scheduled for production, by Ibsen's friend, Christian K. F. Molbech. The latter was in consequence piqued, and communicated with Ibsen, who immediately attempted to pacify him. One cannot but admire the calm surety with which Ibsen always met these sudden outbursts; it was as though he had fully mastered the distinction between the outward circumstances of a transitory nature and the vital occurrences which really were of vast significance. His letter to Molbech was marked by this deliberateness; he would not let a matter of such proportion come between them. "You, your name, your whole individuality, are inseparably connected with the best period of my life," he avowed. Yet Ibsen had to be careful what remarks he made concerning theatre management; they were quoted as soon as uttered, and more than once he was misrepresented. But the stage was not being managed upon broad art principles; it was subject to private prejudices, and Ibsen was being affected by these conditions. He always stood for the artistic spirit in the theatre. The misunderstanding ended satisfactorily, for Molbech dedicated his drama to his "old friend, Dr. Henrik Ibsen, the Poet."

ductions are to be noted. As early as December, 1889, Possart appeared as Consul Bernick; on March 6, 1891, at the Lyceum Theatre (New York), George Fawcett, Alice Fischer, and Elisabeth Tyree were cast for the play. The latest performance ween at the Lyric Theatre (New York), on April 15, 1904, Vilton Lackaye in the cast.

Ibsen is the woodpecker among playwrights; to him the tree of life is in jeopardy because of the decaying spots which his sounding brings to light. He is a skater along the thin surface of convention, not content merely with putting danger signals where the ice is thinnest, and skirting around, but thrusting his critical stick into the depths and forcing others to look with him into the real cause for the flaw. It is not always agreeable to approach the strength of life by searching for the weaknesses; but Ibsen's whole social philosophy contends that so long as the weaknesses exist, there can be no strength; he does not believe in letting sleeping dogs lie.

His modern dramas, beginning with surface conventions, deepened until they shifted in viewpoint from the effects of certain causes to the more psychological and subtle causes which produced the conditions. It was as though the convex mirror of his vision which characterizes "Pillars of Society" had been heated and transformed in a concave vision marking "A Doll's House" and "Ghosts."

His deliberate progress, his determined exposé in "Pillars of Society" became a matter-of-fact statement of conditions—a bare examination shorn of poetic or philosophic substance. The play serves as a concise dramatic hand-book from which might be built something of each of his future plays; it is a drama of location. Here, so he seems to say, is the weakness of the Family; there lies the hollow mockery of Marriage; yonder is your Idealist. He then, in the manner of the calculating lexicographer, defines his position as he goes.

But if the topics he discusses are the plain details

of life, they are none the less vital, so vital indeed that they become in themselves more important than the characters they govern. Consul Bernick in his conversation assumes the attitude of taking an inventory of his past delinquencies and of his present failings.

This thoroughly prose estimate of life was a sudden change from the poetic and philosophic ornateness of "Emperor and Galilean," and there were definite circumstances behind it. The old cause of complaint against provincial smugness at home was still a topic of the utmost importance to Ibsen; occasional contact and constant reading of the papers indicated to him how irresponsive the Norwegians were to the recent events which had shaken France and Germany, how sure they were within themselves of their community-safeness; outside influence did not disturb them. One may well argue that such a state of things need not have compelled Ibsen to break from his poetry. There was another minor cause, indicating the dramatist's proneness to follow others in the matters of style, satisfying himself with the larger power he had of taking the lead in content.

The one person who persisted in remaining near home, yet who was distinctly affected by the modern trend of thought, was Björnson; he was more quickly responsive to outside influence than Ibsen, and his impulsiveness was continually subject to modification. His second period was as distinct from his first, as "Pillars of Society" was from "The Vikings at Helgeland." Representative of this new phase of his workmanship are "The Editor" (1874) and "Bankruptcy" (1875), both of which dealt with questions of modern life—the one a serious comedy of money,

the other a satire on the Scandinavian press. These plays appeared previous to Ibsen's contemplation of "Pillars of Society," and thus, undoubtedly, his mind must have been drawn by them toward a continuation of his social criticism.[1]

Ibsen's characters assemble in his *dramatis personæ*, with their small bundles of past history strapped to their backs; each one, in some way, is a slave of existing conditions; each one has whatever spark of initiative, of individual freedom he may possess, penned up by the restrictions of a hypocritical society. On the threshold of his "third empire," as he sees it, Ibsen stands, inspecting his emigrant crew; there are very few of them he lets pass, certainly not his important characters who are either physically diseased, morally stunted, or socially demoralized. The poignancy of this method rests in the human possibility of each Ibsen case being repeated either in ourselves or in the small social circle of which we are a part. You are a humbug, cries Ibsen of one of his characters. Am I? you ask yourself, taking the burden of the accusation upon your own shoulders.

The terrible tragedy of it all is, however, that to the outward eye these men and women are sound; there are no granular lids, yet their vision is foreshortened; there are no deformed bodies, yet their

[1] If one wishes to carry this comparison between Björnson and Ibsen still further, note Gosse's association of "Leonora" and "The New System" with "A Doll's House," as well as "A Glove" with "The Wild Duck." Sarolea associates "Pillars of Society" with Tolstoi's "Power of Darkness" (Tr., Aylmer Maude, Funk & Wagnalls, 1904).



souls are stunted. On the outside, many a Consul Bernick may win respect; it is only when the voice of a modern Joshua sounds over the calm waters that a turbulent storm arises; then it is that the Pillars of Society totter and fall. "Joshua fit de battle ob Jericho," runs the song, "and the walls came tumbling down." Such is the underlying motive of Ibsen's play.

This is a most repulsive approach to a consideration of life, you argue; it is the realist's despondency. But the difference between Ibsen's view and Vereshagin's, for example, in such a cold, sharp-edged portrayal as his Philippine study entitled "The Letter," is the difference between day and night. Ibsen's characters are not brought to the hospital to die, they are brought there to be cured. An Ibsen clinic has none of the stupefying effects of an anæsthetic; you do not catch the disease from his patients; you simply question whether or not you are cursed with the same symptoms. It is an essentially healthy impulse that sends Ibsen to the contemplation of unhealthy subjects.

He does not love his characters, save the ideal phantoms that flit across his poetic canvases; Mr. Huneker is therefore partly correct when he claims that Thackeray possessed more human sympathy for his snobs. But I cannot see that Ibsen was merciless in his treatment; if his ideas, which stand for certain ethical or moral elements in life, appear to probe unnecessarily—in other words, if the idea crush the character—he is more than likely to satirize the idea

ter. It is not often that Ibsen raised a tempest in

s-pot.

"Pillars of Society" is local; the people are much smaller than the matter-of-fact but very large principles which, in their small way, they retard. In "The Vikings at Helgeland," we were shown the cumulative effect of a lie told for romantic, heroic reasons; here we have the lie in plain clothes.

Consul Bernick is the epitome of this lie; it takes nearly all of the first act to start the wheels in motion, whereby the past setting is recorded; and the latter half of the fourth act presents you with "the placid gleam of sunset after storm." Bernick is a Pillar; he is supposed to be disinterested as a citizen, when the truth is, he is deceiving the public and reaping every advantage he can. For the portrayal of petty gossip, Ibsen's technique is flawless. He places three women and a schoolmaster, Dr. Rörlund, together, and by their mere talk we detect the belief each one holds that because the surface of things remains polished, all is indeed well beneath. Rörlund, in especial, estimates the moral status purely from external appearances; he is the advance-sketch of Rector Kroll in "Rosmersholm," abhorring the restive doubt of the age; he would cut aloof from any progress; he believes that the great community has the whited sepulchres, whereas, in truth, Ibsen's desire is, as he later on in the drama shows in connection with Bernick, to illustrate that through the petty considerations of small communities, man's moral fibre is warped.

What is the lie which "Pillars of Society" dramatizes? Years before, the Consul had had a wild escapade with an actress, which had thrown discredit upon the latter's daughter, Dina Dorf. His wife's younger brother, Johan Tönnesen, had taken upon

himself the consequence, in the desire to get out of the narrowing atmosphere of the town, as well as to save his sister the degradation of disclosure. Bernick, only too ready to clutch at any means of escape, had further improved the occasion—since his business was in an unsettled condition—by casting upon his brother-in-law the further false discredit of running away with the cash-box. Tönnesen had sailed for America, followed soon after by Mrs. Bernick's step-sister, Lona Hessel, whom the Consul had jilted for the sake of better money prospects elsewhere.

These are the main moral outlines to Bernick's figure. His household is made up of people, everyone of whom has been affected by his cowardice. His sister Martha remains in his home, sacrificing her life, singing the woman's saga, yet having faint dreams of the larger world outside, in which Johan, her lover, is fighting. Dina Dorf, now an orphan, moves tragically through an existence made up of slights imposed upon her by the supposedly *moral* crew known as the community. Mrs. Bernick is wholly subservient to the selfish will of her husband. Hilmar Tönnesen is an indistinct male cousin of the family who, thriving upon a euphemistic conception of " the banner of the ideal," suggests the incipiency of any disease. Finally, there is the Consul's son, Olaf, who is to inherit that which his father is building for him.

Bernick, thus the head of a happy household to all outward appearances, is regarded as the ideal citizen; his family as the model home; at all costs must his position be maintained, and naught must be allowed to disturb the fictitious calm. Those people in small

communities who are so solicitous about "the lapsed and lost" had better attend to themselves! The Pillar of Society had once fought the idea of a railroad; the town had applauded his motives, not knowing that his opposition was in the interest solely of his own enterprises. Now, at the opening of the play, Bernick's efforts are all for the railroad, because he sees, though he is silent on the subject, that he will be able to reap additional benefit. Such a Pillar is in ripe condition for the thunderbolt. The crash of its fall will more than disconcert the mediocre respectability of the community.

Now there occurs what Ibsen intends to be as beneficial as a blast of wholesome oxygen in a stale room, but which Bernick, sorely vexed, regards as a calamity. Johan and Lona arrive unexpectedly from America. The latter, so we have gathered from the gossipy ladies, is a "new woman"; she has sung for money, she has given lectures, she has published a book, and as though this were not enough, she dresses in a decidedly manly way. The community is shocked!

These wayfarers arrive at an opportune moment. Dina has all the incipient symptoms of open rebellion; she loathes the proper and moral atmosphere of her surroundings; she chafes beneath continual condescension, best shown in Rörlund's avowal that when it is safe for him to do so, he will marry her, for she "must and shall be helped to rise." Above all, Bernick is just at the culmination of his rascally manœuvres. He is high-sounding in phrases regarding the moral foundations of the town; the family he pictures is a mere chromo of outward colour.



devoid of spirit. As though this were not enough, Bernick is at odds with his old-fashioned workmen, especially one Aune, who preaches discontent among the labourers; the Consul has won a name through his shipyards, yet he does not even hesitate at times to send rotten vessels to sea, having glossed over their dangerous marks. Thus, should you care for symbolism, you might say, with the French critic, that the *Indian Girl* represents our old society with its unsound, its unseaworthy patches.

After this explanation, the bulk of the play centres in the cowardice and regeneration of Bernick as he deals with the situation confronting him. The fresh air let into the society of this small town takes his breath away; when he recovers, his inclination is to fight for his patched-up respectability. Everyone is talking over the return of the miscreants; it disconcerts the people, whom the Consul now, more than ever, wishes to support him; it furnishes fuel for the press. Bernick is at a loss, and his irritation leads to further rashness. He hastens work on the *Indian Girl* regardless of the fact that to send the ship out on time, the patching will have to be slovenly; he soothes his vanity by believing that from him, the real progress in the community emanates. Bernick's philosophy is that the less must fall before the greater. If Aune does not send forth the *Indian Girl* on time, he will lose his job, despite his dependent family. Ibsen introduces this topic for a theatrical purpose.

The arrival of Johan and Lona shocks the second-rate idealism of Hilmar; his indignation knows no bounds when they attempt to speak to him in full

light of day on the street. The Consul comforts him with the supposition that the two will not remain long. Meanwhile Lona has seen enough to fathom the "good works" of Bernick; she pits against this the "good work" she has accomplished with Johan; it has given her the right to live. On the other hand, while this action is in progress, Johan and Dina are drawn together, and the girl is made to realize by his talk what freedom there is in a large country like America, so different from her stunted environment, where propriety and morality are wholly artificial.

When Johan and Bernick are together, however, the walls begin to totter; in private, the Consul recognises that his domestic happiness, his position in society, are due to this "outcast." But it is disconcerting when he hears from Johan that now Lona knows the true state of affairs between them; it was only due to her that she should be told, considering her sacrifice. It is evident at a flash that the return from America is to put Bernicl to the test; the one he has to fear is not so much Johan as Lona.

Bernick is the epitome of self-centred interest; his every action marks him as a scamp; he squanders Martha's worldly substance, he saps her womanhood for his selfish need; the estimate he places upon her is just a little higher than that which he places upon his wife. It is only when Martha is with Johan, and by her attitude shows him that she believes he had really sinned fifteen years before, that it comes upon Johan with titanic force that Bernick has been content to rest on the old lie without one effort to set matters right. She. Martha, has tried to atone, by

her care of Dina, for the sin committed by her lover. Thus moral indignation becomes rife in Johan; the situation only makes him more eager to win Dina for himself after he is cleared.

This is what would please Lona above all things, and she says so outright, thereby shocking the respectable community. By her presence she especially irritates Mrs. Bernick, a flabby specimen of womanhood, who bows to the will of her husband. In contrast, Lona does seem a bit bold, but not, thereby, any the less healthful in her determination. When she confronts Bernick, something of the old romantic Ibsen oozes between the hard lines of reality. She had loved the Consul once, for he was different then from now; he had not been warped by the small provincial community. No sooner was he in the grip of the "moral" upholders than he fell away from her, perhaps because her character and will and independence had annoyed the prudes who condemned and ostracized her. He had then married his wife, not for love, but for her money, thus saving himself at the expense of a woman.

Bernick resorts to utilitarian reasons for his moral lapses; it makes no difference whether his position, his marriage are founded on lies, for, on the one hand, business has prospered, and on the other his wife has finally succeeded in moulding her character to his peculiar needs. His views of marriage savour of Guldstad's calculating estimate, without the latter's matter-of-fact sincerity.

The Consul does not for once consider the individual effect of this rotten foundation upon which he rests; since the proverbial gold that glitters is not

detected as dross, why undeceive an unsuspecting people? This is a dangerous quicksand to live upon. Bernick knows nothing of and cares nothing for the cleansing quality of Ibsen's voluntary sacrifice; he never questions his right to stand so high, for is it not enough that he is a " Pillar of Society?"

He mistakes Lona's determination to aid him in planting his feet firmly on truth, as an effort to revenge herself; if she attempt to do so he will fight for his life. So acute is Ibsen's technique to catch the unessentials of life, that they demand in the acting a most quiet, even, unassuming, yet deft and unerring manner. Overemphasize, and you slip into melodrama; let Hedda Gabler fire her pistol thrice, and you convert subtlety—not so much into theatricalism, for the vagary of the act was theatrical—but into sensationalism. " Pillars of Society " might be similarly pitched. When Rörlund, hearing of Johan's designs on Dina, proclaims that he is unfit to be seen with any girl; when the Consul stands cowed and speechless before the uplifted arm of Johan; when the brow-beaten wife sinks in tears;—we see the lithograph poster that could thrill the multitude. Probably melodrama is dependent upon commonplace scandals and commonplace motives; certainly the whole tone of this Ibsen drama depends upon them. The dialogue is carefully planned for the effect of contrast; Bernick is always called upon to support the community with his moral predominance, just when his moral rottenness is most evident.

The matter of the unworthy ship which Bernick is forcing to sea, is Ibsen's concession to theatrical subterfuge; the Consul's conscience must be sweated

out by self-torture, but not till later. At present, having told Aune the alternative if he fail in his rush work, Bernick would throw responsibility from himself by casting suspicion upon his workmen. This will ease his mind and also will afford him the show of careful exa[illegible]ırds for fraud, all of which would [illegible]redit in the papers. How well he [illegible]

Lona now sees [illegible]steeped magnitude in every phase of its [illegible]owing what she does, her regard for soci[illegible]lenetic order; he does not possess the mo[illegible]eak out, to abide the consequences, to face the re[illegible]s. Suppose he is no worse than the average of men; so much the worse for society. He must atone and she will make him.

It is only when Johan finds that his love for Dina depends for its ultimate success upon his honour, that he demands of Bernick freedom from the lie; the latter has no right to hold back, even though he is crushed, even though his enterprises fail, every one of them. Of course, Bernick does not see the situation in that light; he believes his future rests on the perpetuation of the lie; for his railroad scheme is an underhand deal, and when the disclosure comes, his motives will not be questioned because of what he has accomplished for the good of the community. But what would Bernick's denial of his sin be beside his confession of sin written in letters to Johan as future security! Written evidence is tell-tale.

Melodramatic points mark the progress of this third act. Bernick hears that Johan is to go to America to wind up his affairs; then he will return and demand

moral recompense. That he will sail on the *Indian Girl* first strikes terror to the soul of Bernick; then he sees by this fact a way of escape. Time moves apace and the hour of departure approaches; storm signals are raised at sea, and Bernick is tortured wellnigh to the point of distraction; he tries to ease his conscience with the theological feint of placing the consequences of one's responsibility upon the shoulders of Providence. On the eve of departure Johan is startled by the avowal of Rörlund that Dina is to be his wife. The act closes in melodramatic outbursts; Tönnesen leaves, wholly forgetful of what may have transpired between himself and Martha. Moreover, he is followed by Olaf, Bernick's small son, who has boyish fancies about buffaloes in America, and is intent on going there as a stowaway. In real life he would have been stopped by those who saw him go; but his running away is part of the theatrical machinery of the last act and must not be disturbed.

The culmination is at hand; the citizens of the narrow community life are coming with banners flying and transparencies aglow to pay respect to their greatest Pillar of Society. Bernick is not in a frame of mind to receive them, but circumstances force him to; he knows that he will be expected to respond to their praise with a toast; his fawning, selfish associates in the colonnade of social hypocrisy have told him so.

In the midst of all the preparations in the Bernick house—for "a citizen's home should be transparent to all the world" is the hollow-sounding expression—Johan slips back to say a few last words to Dina and to leave in Lona's hand the incriminating letters

against Bernick, to use in case of immediate need. Meanwhile Martha, self-sacrificing as ever, determines to aid Dina in escaping the clutches of Rörlund. Thus it is that the romance is brought to a head. Dina and Johan depart, eventually to be married, but not, however, be[illegible]igh work, has realized herself. Indivi[illegible]n is the basis of all human happines[illegible]ng true to one's self, can one be true to [illegible]f is the basic strength or weakness of life.

Ibsen's characteristic [illegible] in sacrifice is seen throughout this love tragec[illegible] Martha—for Johan, when he came again, never once saw her, and she has a love so great that she would willingly sacrifice herself for its sake. Ibsen sings to the same purpose, but in different strains from Shakespeare's "Thou Winter Wind"; man's ingratitude is a most flagrant selfishness in his plays.

Bernick is forced by circumstances to take a new lease on life; in his self-conceit, he half forgets the quagmire in which his home life is steeped; he would forget it entirely if Lona would let him. She pursues him relentlessly in the belief that he will respond to whatever there is of worth in his nature. She forces him to recognise in her something of the sustaining balance which he has needed and which his wife might have given him had he allowed her to share life with him. This is a faint echo of Selma's declaration—a faint suggestion that, beneath this idea of "the woman's saga" and the wife's dependence upon the man, restiveness was fermenting, and would some day explode. The explosion came with *A Doll's* House."

The Consul believes that it is too late to break from falsehood; he will make a position for Olaf, and in the younger generation there may be hope for truth. Yet what good after all will this do, for Olaf will but inherit a life of lies. Lona plays her cards well; she is evidently a student of the psychological moment; she now tells Bernick that Johan and Dina have gone for good, and she takes the tell-tale letters and tears them into shreds. An he will, the Consul may "remain standing in the lie."

When news is brought that Olaf has run away, has shipped on the *Indian Girl*, consternation upsets everything; all of the Consul's peculations have been in vain, since they have been for Olaf, not for society. With this feeling, he must face the crowd now approaching his house.

The awakening is taking place, however; for the first time Bernick recognises that the flattering transparencies mean nothing, "they are the lights in a dead room," an opinion reminiscent of Ibsen's poetic metaphor of the "corpse on board the ship." To complete his growing determination, Mrs. Bernick rushes on the scene; she has not only saved Olaf, but she carries news that Aune has defied the orders of the Consul and has kept the *Indian Girl* from sailing. This flood of happiness opens the gates of determination.

Rörlund's speech in the Consul's praise is a monument of falsehood; in Bernick, society has gloried in a broad moral basis; he is the perfect representative of the self-sacrificing citizen; his domestic life has been exemplary. As a father, as a ship-builder, as a Pillar of Society, he has overtopped the expectancy

of the community. Ibsen's phial of sarcasm overflows; it has more reason to do so than in "Love Comedy."

But the revelation is at hand; unmistakably second-rate is Rörlund's speech, but essentially calculated is he to make [illegible]er hand, the sudden remodelling of [illegible]ake-up seems wholly incongruous; [illegible]a logical development of the scourge [illegible]t undergone. But the "well-made" play [illegible]sudden psychological regeneration, and Berni[illegible]eds to utter bold confession of his undeser[illegible]sition; he tells these respectable citizens that he craved power, that he feared the petty interpretations of his narrowing community; he proceeds to unmask his duplicity in the railroad deal, unveiling at the same moment the cunning of his associates. He applies the lash vigorously; he upbraids the old museum of shams; he clears Johan's name. Small wonder that Lona exclaims: "At last you have found your true self!" So rapidly does deceit drop from his shoulders that we see Ibsen, rather than Bernick, casting forth the thunderbolt of truth.

The public slinks off, numbed with surprise; then Bernick sets himself right with his wife, and turns to Lona for forgiveness. She confesses that when Johan told of the old escapade, she was determined that the hero of her youth should stand free and true. This close to the "Pillars of Society" is a mere jugglery, a mere plea for popular appeal; it is a regular family portrait, where the members gather around the fountain head in awkward pose. They are all very serious, *save Olaf*; to him Bernick says: "In future you shall

be allowed to grow up, not as the heir to my life-work, but as one who has a life-work of his own to look forward to." Olaf is too young for such subtlety; he does not even realize how poignant is his childish determination that when he is a man he "won't be a pillar of society."

The skies clear; Johan and Dina, on the high seas in a sound vessel, betoken the new life of the younger generation, and now, comfortable in his consciousness of confession, Bernick turns to the women as the Pillars of Society. Lona takes this for what it is worth; she has the wisdom, while Bernick is simply moved by a general feeling of smug safety. The curtain falls on the aphoristic remark of the "new woman"—"The Spirits of Truth and Freedom—these are the Pillars of Society."

It is only in the heart and core of the play that we find Ibsen, the technician, maturing; the other parts are thoroughly artificial; in fact, should one make a scenario of the plot—and the synopsis here given may serve as such—it will be plainly evident that the machinery is a design and not a development. The characters are actuated by theories which emanate from Ibsen and not from themselves; try as you will to garb Bernick in the clothes of consistency, they cling limply, as all sentiments do that are imposed.

Ibsen, the artist, is breaking from his past, and is sending forth shafts of what his future is to be. He has not yet fully determined what great principles are to underly and to actuate the "younger generation"; Nora is to add the permanent philosophic worth to the phrase. Until then, Ibsen cannot wholly break with his past ideal of womanhood; Lona repre-

sents the struggling elements of the strong woman and the dependent woman; Martha is wholly the old model. There is no big ringing appeal in the play; no situations with original impulses. The drama represents pregnant possibilities. Ibsen is now iterating that woman, as well as man, forms a part of the problem of living; that as an individual she has her rights to free development. Nora is to proclaim, to assert, those rights.

However provincial the people, however *bourgeoise* their attitude toward subjects which confront all rightly educated minds, the problems they handle so unfamiliarly are none the less serious. Let us say that the memory of Grimstad days inspired the scene, none the less is there a thin slice of universal humanity throughout the dialogue. The play is valuable for what it implies, for what it starts in motion; the elements of the family must be made up of truth and freedom; the elements of citizenship must be made up of truth and freedom; the conventional Idealist must relinquish his abominations. What are forms after all? The corpse on deck must be thrown overboard before the "third kingdom" can be gained. This is the *morale* of "Pillars of Society."

If there is subtlety at all in the piece, it lies in the delineation of the characterless yet representative figure of Rörlund; otherwise we have statements of facts—a species of estimate as to what it may cost the individual in his effort to reconstruct society. In every way, debarring its artistic concessions to the theatrical requirements, such as the gathering of reads, the occasional flashes of romantic senti-

mentalism, the sudden reformation of character, "Pillars of Society" makes it possible for "A Doll's House" to follow. Yet when, we might be prompted to ask, is Ibsen to break entirely from the influence of Scribe—to forsake the conventional trade-marks of the romanticists?[1]

[1] Brandes declares that he had difficulty in persuading the Germans that the author of "Pillars of Society" was a Conservative, so confident were they of his being a Socialist.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TORPEDO BENEATH THE ARK

It was after the publication of "A Doll's House," and while consternation reigned supreme in conservative households over this bold and daring declaration of feminine independence, that a Swedish lady is said to have written across her luncheon invitations, "You are politely requested not to discuss Ibsen's new play." Yet it has been torn to tatters and everyone advances a theory based upon personal prejudice. After all is said, we cannot but feel that it is of no material difference to us that Ibsen refused to answer the question: Did Nora return? The significant fact was that an assertive answer, in the form of definite action, was given to the question: Shall a wife remain a puppet and be a slave to her husband's selfish aims?

In "Peer Gynt," "The League of Youth," and "Pillars of Society," we may follow the evolution of Nora; in all of the plays up to the final act of "A Doll's House," we have recognised the sacrificing woman. But Ibsen's "third empire" could no longer hold the idea of the feminine, without individuality; it could no more allow the family to be founded upon such unequal and such a false relationship, than it could allow society to elevate a blatant climber, like Stensgård, or a deplorable Pillar of Society, like Consul Bernick. Once started on this question of marriage, Ibsen takes the obverse and reverse view of the picture. It was necessary for Nora to proclaim her rights; for if she had not, well—Ibsen wrote "Ghosts" instead of answering the question.

In the fall of 1877, Ibsen heard of his father's death; he had thought, during his visit to Norway,

of going to Skien, but he was thoroughly disinclined to come in contact or in collision, as he expressed it, with tendencies foreign to his nature. Whatever others might think, he could not subject himself to this state of things. He wrote his uncle, Christian Paus, to that effect, sending him a portrait of the nephew who must have changed in twenty-seven years. Ibsen was now nearing fifty, and after a prospective trip to Italy he was thinking of permanently settling himself in Christiania, since it was necessary for Sigurd to return; but he knew that he would not find there the fibre of the great world—"liberty of thought and a wide view of things." This doubt held him back.

He and his family remained in Italy for about a year, beginning in the fall of 1878. His life in Rome was a quiet one, but he was comfortably fixed, and he was purchasing old paintings at very low prices, indeed, so low that he boasted he might be able to sell them at thrice their value. The art lover struggled against his antipathy toward "unemployed capital" of any kind; with these and more he would buy, he might decorate a house in Munich where he would return. He saw much of the artist life during the winter. This was all very pleasant to him, and at one time he thought of sending Sigurd back to Munich, where he was at school, himself remaining in Rome. But Ibsen needed to come in contact with German literary life, and besides, he regarded Munich as a species of "spiritual home": even in Italy he felt too far away from the centre of intellectual activity. Sigurd was now a University student about to begin his law courses.

The heat of Rome in June made Ibsen plan to visit Amalfi, where there was "opportunity for bathing," and where he might finish his new play, already begun. His letters during this year exhibit many domestic touches; he was smacking his lips over certain good wines, and planning to furnish his rooms according to very definite tastes.

"A Doll's House" was finished in Amalfi during the summer of 1879; once begun, it engrossed his entire time, for it is believed that during April he had heard of an incident which occurred in the Danish courts, concerning a young married woman, which had given him an excellent suggestion for certain elements in Nora's character. This may have been the immediate impetus, but it was not the initial impulse. Even though Ibsen could not countenance Mill on "The Subjection of Women," and even though he began on the woman question with a detestation for all the talk about emancipation, his larger interest in the balance of the human scale was primarily behind him. The motivation itself may be traced in evolution. The lie was clad in romance throughout "The Vikings at Helgeland"; it reacted upon the individual in "Peer Gynt" and "The League of Youth"; it demoralized the community in "Pillars of Society"; it undermined the home in "A Doll's House"; it was to curse the child in "Ghosts."

There is a clever bit of speculation on Mr. Archer's part as to the technical maturity which descended upon Ibsen in the final scene of the play. No one can gainsay him as to the marks of the "well-made" *drama* which are to be found throughout the first

two acts; but though there is an evident line of demarcation between Nora's emancipation and the events leading up to Helmer's reading of the incriminating letter, we can but theorize after all about the possibility of Ibsen's original intention, when he first set out to write, of making the play end satisfactorily, in the tone of "Pillars of Society."

Indeed, he as much as says that he was *forced* to furnish a happy ending for the North German theatres,[1] in order to avoid the dangers of having others adapt in accordance with popular taste. The surprise is that Ibsen ever argued himself into the belief that such a concession was necessary. "When my works are threatened," he wrote, "I prefer, taught by experience, to commit the act of violence myself."

His business manager, Mr. Wilhelm Lange, had shown him the necessity for a second ending. Therefore:

"I sent to him, for use in case of absolute necessity, a draft of an altered last scene, according to which Nora does not leave the house, but is forcibly led by Helmer to the door of the children's bedroom; a short dialogue takes place, Nora sinks down at the door, and the curtain falls."

This does not in any way weaken Ibsen's own attitude as to how the play should consistently and dynamically end. It only points to the fact that he was much more interested in the conditions which made it necessary for Nora to leave. But he was emphatic about the effect of a happy ending upon the

[1] This ending was used by Frau Hedwig Niemann-Raabe, who played Nora in Berlin. See Correspondence, 220.

[illegible] of his morals; he stigmatized the concession as "barbaric violence" and he declared himself [illegible] to it.[1]

When Ibsen forwarded the altered scene to the director of the Wiener Stadttheatre, he called the [illegible] to the great loss in effect incurred thereby. This emphasis of the theatrical value only [illegible] my conviction that in a discussion of "A Doll's House," people lose sight of the fact that primarily Ibsen was a dramatist and not a pamphleteer. [illegible] for a stage climax, the slamming of the door as Nora departs and the transfiguration on the face of Helmer are more likely to be impressed on the mind and more likely to fix in unmistakable tones the underlying, the fundamental tragedy of this doll's house, than all the quiet domestic reconciliations and sickly sentimental understandings with which the stage is deluged.

As late as 1891 Ibsen referred to his concession, incidental to Eleonora Duse's first impulse to use the happy ending; he claimed that he was forced to comply with managerial demands because the copyright law afforded him no adequate protection. But this much he could say, that "it was for the sake of the last scene that the whole play was written."

The piece was published in Copenhagen on December 4, 1879, and with great rapidity it spread from country to country. As an acting drama, its attractiveness has not been so much in idea as in the two dominant situations which lie in the tarantella dance and the final exit. But in these two situations, we

[1] See letter 142. Correspondence written to the editor of the *Nationaltidende* on February 17, 1880.

are to note a difference in the depth of Ibsen. It is an easy matter for a fairly intelligent actress to thrill you with the wild emotional tension of the dance, but the final scene makes demands upon a very mature conception and a very ripe artistic grasp.[1] The departure of Nora may be theatrically effective, but it is also far and above this in spiritual meaning.

A stage rôle lives by reason of its effectiveness on the stage; we have far outgrown the sacrificial realism of Dumas's Camille; Sudermann himself has passed beyond the limitations of the German romanticism of Magda, which on the one hand struggles with a certain tradition handed down from Dumas, and on the other with a certain individualism taken from Ibsen; moreover, the time will come, if it is not already here, when we shall cease to regard Nora as a startling type. But these feminine vehicles for acting will survive the force and freshness of the ideas they represent because their framework is striking.

In 1879 and for many years after, "A Doll's House" was regarded solely in the light of an unwarranted attack upon marriage, the mere husk of Nora's behaviour being taken. Ibsen was called an anarch in the social scheme of things; people could not see beyond their conventions; they could not grant that his so-called feminine individualism was simply the means of clearing life of those ruts which retarded the establishment of true relations, just as his rampant idealism in "Love's Comedy" helped to clear the atmosphere of a deal of cant regarding the official

[1] The excellence of Miss Ethel Barrymore's performance of Nora was marred by the immaturity of the final scene.

stages leading to the consummation of the marriage bond.

We are inclined to approach Ibsen's plays as we would approach a technical treatise upon this or that subject; we entirely ignore the poetic viewpoint in our effort to see whether he has established properly the scientific standpoint. Ibsen appears to me to be gloriously indifferent as to the particulars in his scientific facts. He knows enough to be able to present one with an instinctive understanding of the various dangers attendant upon these facts. In detail, his theory of heredity may run far away from the knowledge of the medical profession—for example, that strange relationship existing between Brand and Gerd. But science has never proved as yet the particulars of the inheritance phenomena; it has only noted tendencies by analogy; nor has science been able to determine the proportionate ratio between congenital bequeathment and that of environment, or what Ibsen often calls "the spirit of the times." [1]

The principle, the philosophic motive, the basic use of heredity in Ibsen's plays are not only quickening, but true, according to our present moral, ethical, and mental planes. The particular accuracy may be questioned, but the impressionistic truth is undeniable.[2]

[1] For other views on this subject, see "Health, Strength, and Happiness," by C. W. Saleeby, M.D., F.R.S., Edin. (Chap. xxiv, "Concerning Heredity," p. 366), where the extremely important work of Galton and Weismann is discussed.

[2] The external history of "A Doll's House" is a long one. Issued in 1879, the 2nd ed. was called for, Kbhvn, on Jan. 4,

There is wonderful compression in the dialogue of "A Doll's House"; in this respect it is far above the technical manœuvring of "Pillars of Society"; there, one had to have a special scene, a special group-

1880; 3rd ed., Kbhvn, March 8, 1880; 4th ed., Feb. 12, 1896. It rapidly spread to all countries, translations appearing in England, France, Germany, Spain, Russia, Portugal, Poland, Hungary, Italy and Holland. In English, note the following versions: by T. Weber (1880); by Henrietta Frances Lord (1882; containing a life of Ibsen); by William Archer (1889). M. Prozor made a French translation (1889), for which Édouard Rod contributed a preface. Among the Italian versions, it is only necessary to call attention to that by L. Capuana (1895), used by Duse. In Germany: by Wilhelm Lange (1880) [it was generally known as "Nora"]; by M. von Borch (1890); by Charles Kirschenstein (1891); by I. Engeroff (1892). Among the comments noted by Halvorsen, see Leo Berg: "H. I. und das Germanenthum in der modernen Litteratur"; Sir E. R. Russell and P. C. Standing: "Ibsen on his Merits"; Jules Lemaître: "Impressions de Théâtre," 5e série (Paris, 1891). See also *The Fortnightly Review*, vol. 51, p. 107 (E. Gosse); vol. 52, p. 30 (W. Archer); vol. 55, p. 725 (O. Crawfurd);—*Cosmopolis*, vol. i, 88 (A. B. Walkley); vol. ii., 738 (Francisque Sarcey;—*Neue Deutsche Rundschau*, 1894, i., 517 (H. Albert);—*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 8, 1891 (W. Archer). Consult Walter Besant's "The Doll's House—and After," in *English Illustrated Magazine*, Jan., 1890; Edna D. Cheney's "Nora's Return; a sequel to 'A Doll's House' of Henrik Ibsen" (Boston, 1890). There have been many parodies, attempted largely in Scandinavia. That in English, deserving of any recognition, is Anstey Guthrie's "Mr. Punch's Pocket Ibsen" (1893), which was itself translated into a foreign tongue.

The performances of Nora, like those of Camille and Magda, are legion; it is a rôle tempting every stock actress as well as every star. I rely principally upon Halvorsen, although I have amended here and there. Copenhagen, Dec. 21, 1879 (Fru Hennings); Christiania, Jan. 20, 1880 (Fru Johanne

ing of characters to serve in explaining the past situation upon which the present action depended. Here, however, Ibsen's art seems to have become endowed with the power of concentration; the past

Juell); Stockholm, Jan. 8, 1880 (Fru Hwasser); Munich, March 3, 1880 (Fru Ramlo-Conrad), etc. Among the German Noras may be mentioned Lilli Petri, Pasch-Grevenberg, Agnes Sorma, Gertrud Eysold, Friederikka Gossmann, Milan-Doré, Johanna Buska. Helena Modjeska played the part in Polish, November, 1881; Eleonora Duse, Feb., 1892, and earlier, in 1889. In London, the play was first seen in a version prepared by Henry Arthur Jones and Henry Hermann to accord with English convention: called "Breaking a Butterfly." It was attempted at the Princess Theatre, March 3, 1884, with Kyrle Bellew and Beerbohm Tree in the cast. (See the English *Theatre*, Jan.-June, 1884, April 1, 1884, p. 209, for a notice of the performance by Mr. Archer.) The first regular production was given at the Novelty Theatre, June 7, 1889, with Miss Janet Achurch and Mr. Charles Carrington. With this performance, Ibsen may be said to have commenced his English stage career, although I find recorded a previous production of "A Doll's House" by an amateur club in 1885, and a notice of an earlier performance during 1883 in Louisville, Kentucky, when Madame Modjeska acted Nora. A French version was played in Brussels during 1889, but not until 1894, April 20, did Madame Réjane present it in Paris. During 1889, Miss Achurch took her company to Australia, even playing in Cairo. Barring the "lost" performance of Modjeska, aforementioned, Mrs. Minnie Maddern Fiske may be called the first American Nora (1889-90); Réjane came over with the part in 1895 and Agnes Sorma in 1897 (Irving Place Theatre, N. Y., April 12). [See chapter on Ibsen in Norman Hapgood's "The Stage in America, 1897-1900."] American audiences have at different times seen the following Noras: Mrs. Richard Mansfield (Beatrice Cameron), Alla Nazimova, Madame Komisarzhevsky (1908), Ethel Barrymore. Consult Halvorsen. The play is familiar to the Yiddish theatre.

history of Nora, the incidents affecting her character, are worked in as inherent elements of the story; they are there when wanted, but holding as much significance in developing the character further as in explaining the fundamental nature upon which the character is built. In this respect, the cloak of Scribe is now naught but filmy threads, which are to fall away entirely from the shoulders of Ibsen the moment Nora divests herself of the Capri dress.

How shall we take "A Doll's House"—as a preachment or as a portrait of a woman who is the victim of education and the tragic thrall of a certain popular conception of marriage? If one begins from the standpoint of the feminine, one will perforce be obliged to include the other phase; this is sufficient indication of the unity with which Ibsen has reconciled the two aspects. His portrait of Selma is here enlarged; we remember how fresh and invigorating was the declaration of independence in the midst of the false atmosphere of "The League of Youth." Her cry represents rebellion against the arrested growth of womanhood; in the instantaneous flash of her outburst we are presented with the clue to Nora.

When Ibsen knocks out the fourth wall of the Helmers' room he does not say to you, I am going to show you how a tragedy may occur between a man and his wife. He says: Here a tragedy *is being* lived, a tragedy in which individuals are being impeded by a false system of social duties and responsibilities. I am going to show you a husband, to all outward appearances conforming to the most polished terms of the code, a wife who seemingly is fulfilling the dictates of the marriage law to honour and c

Now, let us analyze, step by step; let us rend the veil and reach the truth.

The play has not progressed very far when we discover that the plea is to be made entirely from the feminine side. Nora, the mother of three children, is stunted in her spiritual growth, but as events will show, the higher activities of the woman are dormant. She is the product of a father who has petted her and found a certain pleasure in loving her, but he has never really shown her by word or deed that she is essential to him; he has simply used her as a means of satisfying his self-conceit. In this environment, where she has not been regarded on a thinking basis, her moral, her ethical sense has not expanded. Nora's husband has all the self-conceit of her father, but, unlike the father, he has an inscrutable sense of business honour.

Nora is thus regarded not as an essential part of Helmer's life, but merely as an accessory; she is to be moulded to his pleasure, to his idea; that mutual help is only right, according to this state of things, which dovetails with the individual desire of the husband. Outwardly, the law may claim that all this is in high conformity *with* the law, but it is spiritual, moral, social suicide to allow such conditions to exist.

There is no hope for the child brought up in an atmosphere thus steeped in lies; if we are to have a "third kingdom," we must not stunt the whole development of the woman. Ibsen's contention is, therefore, that by this equality of freedom we assure the future freedom of society, even as by the marriage bond, or the mutual acceptance of the responsibilities of life, a husband and wife assure the future

growth of the race. Some people would say that Ibsen's danger rests upon his insistence on the absolute freedom of the individual, even in a state of marriage; and they thus illogically declare him to be against marriage, as they have time and time again proclaimed him no believer in love. But he holds nothing of the kind in "A Doll's House"; he does not infer from the tragedy there existing that marriage is a failure; he makes no inference, but what attitude he does assume is this: I will show you why I think this marriage between Nora and Helmer is a failure. And in doing so, he throws all the weight of his argument in the Nora side of the scale. This girl-wife is an undeveloped child; she nibbles her macaroons, she shows inconsequential joy over the worldly betterment of Torvald, she is a mere "song bird," instinctively committing subtle acts without knowing exactly why. Her logic is unprincipled, besides which she has inherited some of the weakness of her father. But this is no fault of hers; it is the fault of her education. Nature has made her a mother in fact, but in spirit, as yet, she is simply a child among her children. When she leaves them, she does so in order the better to understand them and her own duty toward them in the future.

In the three acts, Nora *grows* as a woman, similarly situated, would develop in real life; she is awakened, regenerated, re-born under a scourge which tears her soul; the weakness of her retarded sense of right thus becomes the source of her immanent strength. It is apparent when Mrs. Linden and Krogstad are introduced upon the scenes, both with a past history in which their lives have touched, that they

to have little to do with the immediate problem other than hasten it to a head. Their eventual union is a flash of the old Ibsen; it is the Scribe in him; he is here following a worn-out formula.

Nora in the past has forged her father's name in order to obtain money for a journey which Torvald's health demands. The dramatic machinery places this note in Krogstad's hands—he himself a forger who has served his time and who would now rise save that society will not let him.

Sacrifice after sacrifice is made by Nora to pay off this debt, and in its way it might have been liquidated had not Krogstad lost his position at Torvald's bank, and been pushed by the latter to the verge of despair. It is when Krogstad stands upon the threshold of the Helmer home, with the forged note in his hand, and with the momentary desire to drag Nora into the gutter with him, that the latent woman in Nora begins to stir.

Physically, she has attained her growth; she is very agreeable to look upon; Helmer in an excited state makes us uncomfortably aware of this in the third act, after his return from the tarantella. But not until this moment, with Krogstad watching her at play with her children, is her mental status to receive a shock. Heretofore every one has sheltered her ignorance; now is the commencement of her salvation.

Helmer loathes debt and he would consider it beneath his dignity to be beholden to his wife in any way. When Nora tells Mrs. Linden of her scheming to save her husband's life—without saying anything of the manner in which the scheme was worked—her *monologue* exposition of her own character is masterly

in execution; Ibsen often reaches those heights in technique where the absolute inevitableness of his dialogue is felt. Why should he not work for effect in the way he groups his characters? He is first and foremost a dramatist.

So it is that I have no quarrel with the manner in which his big climaxes, and his intermediate climaxes are reached, just so that their effect is not disconcerting. Drama is not life itself, but a reflex, and at that a reflex only of critical moments. We are dealing here with a crisis in Nora's life; the rallying point in one's individual existence may become evident suddenly.

When Krogstad's threat to expose Nora hangs over her, she is merely frightened; her begging Helmer to reinstate him in the bank is not fraught with any tragedy until Helmer airs his opinions upon Krogstad's moral weakness, his cowardice, his trickery in concealing his forgeries; but worse still, the effect of all this on his children. In bringing forward his views on heredity, Torvald turns Nora's fright into a deeper fear.

Her persistency in pleading for Krogstad irritates Helmer; he defies her by mailing the clerk's dismissal to him. Every move that is taken closes around Nora, tighter and tighter. The last resort is reached by Krogstad; he comes to Nora on Christmas day; he tells her that he will not unveil her weakness to everyone, but that Torvald must know. This brings terror to Nora's soul; she now recognises that the I O U given to this man is his weapon of defence, and she is made to realize it still further when she sees him drop it in the letter-box with an explanation of all it means.



That wild practising of the tarantella at the close of the second act—what is it but a legitimate theatrical contrast of intensest emotion with apparent light grace? It grips the audience, for all the while one knows that the soul of Nora Helmer is being carried through the fires of a regenerating scourge. The wounds are being torn apart, so that they may heal all the more healthily. Mrs. Linden has gone to plead with Krogstad for the withdrawal of the letter, while Nora, by her seeming vagaries of the moment, is keeping Helmer away from the box. This is an effective theatrical situation; it is not, however, the vital scene of the play.

Already there has occurred to Nora the possibility of a miracle happening. She has thoughts of suicide; then, if her name is dishonoured, Torvald will surely rise up and take the blame upon himself. It is only the impulse on his part to do this that Nora wants to occur. When she tells Mrs. Linden of the forgery, she impresses upon her in a vague way the necessity of remembering that she did it, and not Torvald. So at the close of the second act, physically weak, when Nora hears that Christina has not seen Krogstad, her only consolation is in the coming of the miracle. Her husband may now sacrifice for her as she has sacrificed for him!

It makes no difference whether Krogstad and Mrs. Linden renew the love episode of many years before; it is now too late for the letter to Torvald to be withdrawn; there must indeed be an end to this unhappy secret. So that when Helmer returns from the tarantella, dragging the unwilling Nora with him, we feel that the supreme moment is at hand.

The conflicting elements in Torvald's character are subtly portrayed; he is a live figure, with those small weaknesses that in the bulk go to make a man of consuming selfishness, and conventional respectability. As he sits with Nora, the stereotyped romance of his nature wells up; yet there is no real vital understanding between himself and his wife; his eye catches her smooth shoulder, her glorious neck, he holds her in his arms, but they are farther apart on that night than ever before.

For when Helmer goes to the letter-box and takes Krogstad's missive into his room, we can almost count the moments before he throws the door back, and re-enters, frantic with the rage which sweeps over him; it is *his* honour, *his* future, *his* feelings that are foremost in his mind; his thoughts grapple with the suspicion that may fall upon *him*, the power that Krogstad now has over *him*. Surely Nora realizes that there can be no miracle! His final blow lies in his threat about taking the children away from her, even though she remain in his house for the sake of appearances!

Then Nora receives a note from Krogstad, which Torvald, in his wild suspicious state, opens himself. It contains the I O U and an apology; Helmer is overjoyed—he is saved, his position in the public regard is secure. Only afterwards does he think of Nora; of course he will forgive her; she may lean on him; he will offer strength to her womanly helplessness; he will protect her.

But the time for shielding Nora has passed; her husband's cowardice has prevented the miracle of miracles from happening. Yet in the three days

through which she has fought, a miracle *has* happened —Nora has become a woman. When she lays aside the Capri masquerade, the doll's house tumbles to the ground. Torvald is faced by an individual he does not know.

For eight years they have lived together and this is the first time they have ever seriously talked about serious things. One may say that this is the first instance in which Nora has demanded such consideration, but that does not take from the fact that she has only lived with Torvald; in spirit she has never been his wife. She has never really been happy, only heedlessly merry, and the reason for this is that Torvald has only required of her, surface satisfaction. Nora must educate herself; she must set about it alone; Helmer is no fit teacher for her; she must stand alone. If she has been blind to experience, then she must make herself whole.

Now comes the declaration of independence. Helmer believes a wife's holiest duties are to her husband and children, but Nora contends that there is above all else the duty toward herself. The world might insist that she is primarily a wife and a mother, but she is of a different opinion. "I believe," she declares, "that before all else I am a human being, just as much as you are—or at least that I should try to become one." Here is a concise statement of Ibsen's view of the woman question. It is a defiance flung at his worn-out romantic theory of the woman's saga.

Nora no longer can abide by what people say, or by the statements made in books; she must explain clearly to herself the meaning of religion; she will not

act without knowing. If she is to live in a society, she must learn, she must settle for herself whether she or society is right. Helmer cannot understand her attitude; in fact, her mention of the miracle puzzles him. "No man sacrifices his honour, even for one he loves," he tells Nora, to which she replies: "Millions of women have done so." As Brandes says, this remark reveals Ibsen as keenly alive to the progressive thoughts of the day.

And now it looms up before Nora that for eight years she has lived with a strange man, has borne him three children, has been married by law, but has never been a wife. After all, the miracle of miracles is happening. Torvald declares that he has the strength to become another man; Nora is determined to be a different woman. She gives him her wedding ring; she removes from her the bondage which has marked the doll's house. To make things different in the future, the two must so change that communion between them shall be a marriage. In such a spirit Nora leaves the house.

This startling action raised consternation when the play was published, and to this very day the camps are divided. After all that righteous indignation, after all the firm conviction which Nora displays, to have had her take off her coat and remain, would have thrown the play into bathos, and technically would have resulted in an anti-climax. Besides which, even though through revelation Nora may have suddenly developed, it would take a longer time to make a man of Helmer. The separation—which in Norway would be equivalent to a divorce—gave the two time to adjust themselves to their awakened view of Y

And should it be absolutely necessary for one to have a solution, then it were safe to say that nature in the end furnishes it by having given to the Helmers three children. The happy ending is worthy of Scribe; the logical ending was the original force of Ibsen.

The importance of the play, however, rests in its moral force; as Boyesen says, its power is not violent, but it throbs with nervous tension. You can take an external view of the piece, and claim that the unhappiness of the Helmer household was due to the selfishness of Torvald; but Ibsen's belief is that it was due to the fact that society countenances the relations between husband and wife where the latter is immature. And that immaturity was wholly due to the peculiar condition of Nora's education. That we have outgrown our reticence in respect to this subject is seen in the consideration, now confronting our educators, as to how far we should admit into our instruction for adolescence a knowledge of the elements differentiating the sexes, and of the elements serving to draw them together.

In their ignorance some people take pride in speaking of the stagnant atmosphere of Ibsenism, but however much you may agree or disagree with this style of drama, you cannot blind yourself to the energy contained therein. Yet because people disagree with a man and dislike for the moment his general tone, is no reason that this man is easily killed. The case of Henrik Ibsen in England exemplifies this fact. Soon after its first production in London by Miss Achurch, "A Doll's House," while treated with a certain leniency, was regarded solely in the light of a fad; critics could see nothing noble

in Nora—noble in the romantic sense. They became facetious;[1] they took certain statements in the dialogue with strange literalness. Only a few men like Dowden, Gosse and Archer[2] saw the significance of the slamming door.

Jules Lemaître misinterprets the "miracle of miracles"; he argues that inasmuch as Torvald's awakening is quite as pronounced as Nora's, they should have remained together. He writes: "Her husband does not comprehend her. He in himself represents formal and pharisaical propriety and the respect of social conventions. She herself has the presentiment of a morality and of a religion more sincere, larger, freer of forms, more intelligent and more indulgent. And it is in order to discover them fully that she goes into solitude. . . . Hé, Madam Nora, do not look so far away; continue to be a good mother and to be a good wife!" Lemaître argues on the principle that while Ibsen does not attack marriage as an institution, he does criticise scathingly the manner in which the institution in a majority of cases is perpetuated; the French critic narrows down until he arrives at the minute points in what he regards as Ibsen's thesis; he does not take the broad sweep of

[1] See the London *Truth*, June 11, 1891.

[2] Mr. Archer contrasts "Robert Elsmere" with the "declaration" in "A Doll's House." Mrs. Ward's novel was published in 1888. As a concession to English conservatism, Ibsen's play was, as we have noted, transformed into "Breaking a Butterfly" by Henry Arthur Jones and H. Herman (1884). It represented the husk deprived of the life; Archer compared it with a weakened Frou-Frou. See Mr. Archer's analysis; *Fortnightly Review*, July, 1906; Arthur Symons in *Quarterly Review*, October, 1906.

the vigorous criticism. Hence his statement that were one to consider the points constituting a perfect marriage, one would never marry. Ibsen's plea, on the other hand, in the realization of his "third empire," is that provided the foundation is healthily laid, the details will take care of themselves. It is only because of the false basis that the ignoble consequences, even the minutest, are relentlessly thrust before our vision.

Where the moral situation receives its most poignant strength is in the imagined picture of a mob scene where Nora, as Dr. Brandes says, frail as she is, stands against the forces of society. Over and above any particularization, "A Doll's House" represents Ibsen's fundamental social belief. He makes no special demands for Nora, but, regarding her as a human being, writes his play with the sole intention of showing another reason why the individual must be given the right of freedom.

Even in this play there are evidences that he will be heard from again: first, in the matter of heredity; second, as to the danger to society in the perpetuation of a lie; and, third, in a re-statement of the marriage question from the standpoint of Nora's remaining with her husband and children. Again we may, from the scientific facts, have certain cause to quarrel with Ibsen.

"The conflicts of individuals with law and conventions," writes Shaw in his preface to "Man and Superman," "can be dramatized like all other human conflicts; but they are purely judicial"; yet there are deeper conflicts than this. Ethical teachers most generally approach Nora from the standpoint of

being an enemy to moral law and order; they arraign her as a desecrator of the marriage bond, when, by her stand, she simply represents an effort to make the bond secure.[1]

The winter of 1879-1880 was spent by Ibsen in Munich; in the spring of the year he was full of the idea of writing a book about his artistic development, not an interpretation, but a plain statement of facts. So intent was he that for a long while he persisted in the plan; but notwithstanding, Hegel raised many objections which were accepted by Ibsen; the latter was firmly of the opinion, however, that only he could tell his inmost motives. Ten years before, he had claimed with some show of pride, in a letter to Botten-Hansen, that he had always written because impelled by deep reasons, and not only because his subject was good.

This personal sense permeates his letters at this time; his sole aim, in his belief, was to effect, through the ideas expressed in his plays, his "spiritual emancipation and purification." No doubt there are extant some memoranda which will represent his firm opinion as to his consistent growth, but on the whole, it was wise in Hegel to check this self-analysis, however much readers of Ibsen may have lost by the abandonment of the plan. On March 16, 1882, he

[1] A curious instance of a misunderstanding of the Ibsen object is seen in "Marriage and Divorce," a booklet by Dr. Felix Adler. Personally the majority would rather reach truth through the medium of light—and, in this respect, we cannot but deplore Ibsen's persistent use of smoked glasses—yet none the less is truth the truth, whatever the medium. Ibsen's problems, however, gain in dynamic power because they are set in such a narrow atmosphere of philistinism.

wrote to Hegel from Rome, nevertheless, emphasizing that many people claimed that he owed the public some autobiographical statement; a few months before he had written to Professor Olaf Skavlan, who was founding a magazine, offering to send him parts of a manuscript, "From Skien to Rome," upon which he had been engaged.[1]

The determination not to write a play was soon broken by Ibsen. The summer of 1880 was spent at his old haunts in Berchtesgaden, where he was joined by Jonas Lie. Then for the winter he returned to the Via Capo le Case in Rome, and in the following summer (1881) was at Sorrento; how different, though, the product of his work now, and in 1867, when he had first visited this place! It is the difference between "Peer Gynt" and "Ghosts."

The work on his new play had so rapidly progressed that he had finished it by the end of November, 1881. When he wrote to Ludwig Passarge on December 22d, consenting to the latter's desire to write a biography, he commented upon the deluge of letters reaching him by every mail from people decrying or commending it. He was rather satisfied over the effect; he knew it was dangerous stuff for the German theatre as well as for Scandinavia, but notwithstanding this, Hegel, sounding the interest of the public in Ibsen, issued ten thousand copies as the first edition.

[1] I do not believe any of this material has been published since; it certainly was not sent to the magazine, for political reasons, as Correspondence, 161 will show. Personal books, diaries, and additional letters will assuredly be forthcoming *from* now on.

The public[1] might have known, by the delineation of Dr. Rank in "A Doll's House," that Ibsen was making preliminary sketches for a play on heredity. But in hewing out his plot for "Ghosts,"

[1] Due probably to the very large first edition, but also to the prejudice against the play itself, a second edition was not issued until 1894. English translations are as follows: by Miss Henrietta Frances Lord (1885); by Havelock Ellis (1888); by William Archer (1897). In French: by M. Prozor (1889.—See *La Revue Indépendante*, vol. x, 1-116, Jan.-Feb.); by Rodolphe Darzens (1890); another edition of Prozor's version (1889) contained a preface by Édouard Rod. In German: by M. von Borch (1884); by G. Morgenstern (1893); by Fritz Albert (1890); by A. Zinck (1890); by Wilhelm Lange (1899). Editions in other languages: see Halvorsen. Among the commentaries, note, besides references elsewhere referred to: George Moore in "Impressions and Opinions;" *The Nineteenth Century*, 26:241 (W. F. Lord); 30:258 (H. A. Kennedy); *The New Review*, 4:381 (Justin McCarthy); *The Overland Monthly* (1890) [Grace E. Channing]; *La Revue d'art dramatique*, June 15, 1890 (G. Deymier); *Revue Bleue*, July 4, 1891 (Ch. Rabot). Many parodies on "Ghosts" are recorded by Halvorsen. In English, note "Ibsen's Ghost; or, Toole Up to Date," Toole's Theatre, London, May 30, 1891; "A ghost, not by Ibsen," Criterion Theatre, London, June 28, 1892. A Spanish parody was presented in Madrid during 1894.

The stage history is a varied one, developing, however, in spite of continued censorship. I follow Halvorsen, with a few modifications and additions: The first performance was given at Helsingborg on Aug. 22, 1883, with August Lindberg as Oswald; it reached the Royal Dramatiske Theatre in Stockholm, Sept. 27, 1883, a fortnight earlier having been given at another theatre in the same city. Copenhagen saw a performance (August 28, 1883), and Christiania also (Oct. 17, 1883), only not at the regular theatre. The play did not reach Germany until April 14, 1886, when it was given at the Stadttheatre (Augsburg), with Ibsen present; he likewise witnessed the performance as presented at the Court Theatre

he made a combination of two elements in his previous play. Helmer had been drawn as a character of smug respectability; Dr. Rank was suffering from the sins of his father. Oswald Alving is the product

of the Duke of Meiningen. The productions, however, were not publicly advertised, even in Berlin, where it was played Jan. 9, 1887, at a private matinée. On Sept. 29, 1889, at the "Freie Bühne," Agnes Sorma was cast as Regina. See Halvorsen for other interesting dates relating to German cities. Note especially in Berlin, Deutsches Theatre (Nov. 27, 1894) and Lessing-Theatre (Nov. 27, 1894), simultaneous performances. In France, the play reached Paris, the Théâtre Libre, May 29, 30, 1890, with Antoine as Oswald and Mlle. Barny as Mrs. Alving. Both in France and Germany the piece had remarkable influence on the literary men of the younger generation. "Ghosts" has held the stage in London on rare occasions, despite the censor. On March 13, 1891, a performance was presented at J. T. Grein's "Independent Theatre," (Royalty Theatre, Soho). See Archer's article, "The Mausoleum of Ibsen," *Fortnightly Review*, August, 1893; Shaw's "Dramatic Opinions." Also consult Archer's "Theatrical World, 1894"; *The Saturday Review* (Shaw), 1895, 1: 476. Other English efforts are noted by Halvorsen, but are ignored by Archer as of no theatrical significance. "England," writes Mr. Archer, "enjoys the proud distinction of being the one country in the world where 'Ghosts' may not be publicly acted." In Italy, the play has been used since 1893, and forms part of the repertoire of Novelli. Among other places into which it has penetrated, note Montevideo, South America, August, 1897. In New York, we note on Jan. 5, 1894, at the Berkeley Lyceum, Mr. Courtney Thorpe as Oswald and Miss Ida Goodfriend as Mrs. Alving. In 1899, at the Carnegie Lyceum, there prospered an "Independent Theatre," furthered by Mr. Paul Kester, Mr. John Blair, Mr. Norman Hapgood, and others. Miss Mary Shaw was Mrs. Alving in their production of "Ghosts." Several minor productions were planned elsewhere. In 1905-6, Madame Nazimova, with Paul Orleneff *came to* New York, rented a small room on the lower East Side

of the moral rottenness of Captain Alving and of the moral weakness of his mother. Ibsen proves, therefore, satisfactorily to himself, that Nora was right in leaving her children.

"My poor innocent spine must do penance for my father's wild oats," says Dr. Rank, adding in a vein of grim humour that it was too bad, "especially when the luckless spine attacked never had any good of them." Captain Alving by his wild indiscretions with his serving maid, and by his debauchery, undermines the future physique of his son, and bequeathes to him certain ungovernable instincts which well-nigh involve him in incest. Regina represents the outcome of Captain Alving's escapade; she has inherited a completely distorted moral view, and her nature is made up of the lowest inclinations.

This is by no means an edifying canvas, and Ibsen does not mean to have it so; but his object is not exploitation; he wishes only to prove, granting his unscientific bungling with heredity, that Mrs. Alving might have prevented the catastrophe of Oswald's mental decay, if she had taken her own initiative and not listened to the conventional, superficial advice of Pastor Manders. Her regeneration, unlike Nora's, arrived too late.

Ibsen, therefore, was setting a torpedo beneath the ark, and the manner in which the explosion was

and gave, among many plays, a notable production of "Ghosts." An article written by her on "Ibsen's Women," for *The Independent* (New York), Oct. 17, 1907, contains the following: "I wanted to play Regina for my graduation piece at the dramatic school at Moscow, but they would not let me. 'Ghosts' was at that time prohibited by the censor, because it reflects on the Church."

received far exceeded his expectations, although, as he wrote to Hegel, he was prepared for some share of the folly and violence which came from the press. Björnson and Brandes were firm in their support, the latter hastening to declare himself in a scholarly review. From Rome on January 3, 1882, Ibsen sent him grateful acknowledgment.

"In Norway, however, I do not believe that the blundering has in most cases been unintentional," he wrote; "and the reason is not far to seek. In that country a great many of the professional reviewers are theologians, more or less disguised; and these gentlemen are, as a rule, quite unable to criticise literature rationally. . . . The reverend gentlemen are very often excellent members of local boards; but they are, unquestionably, our worst critics."

Here, then, is Ibsen's own estimate of Pastor Manders. His next comment was made on January 6th:

"I was quite prepared for the hubbub," he began; . . . "they endeavour," he continues "to make me responsible for the opinions which certain of the personages of my drama express. And yet there is not in the whole book a single opinion, a single utterance, which can be laid to the account of the author. I took good care to avoid this. . . . My intention was to produce the impression in the mind of the reader that he was witnessing something real. Now, nothing would more effectually prevent such an impression than the insertion of the author's private opinions in the dialogue. Do they imagine at home that I have not enough of the dra-

matic instinct to be aware of this? . . . Then they say the book preaches nihilism. It does not. It preaches nothing at all. It merely points out that there is a ferment of nihilism under the surface, at home as elsewhere. And this is inevitable. A Pastor Manders will always rouse some Mrs. Alving to revolt. And just because she is a woman she will, once she has begun, go to great extremes."

While there was perhaps more intention in Ibsen's design than he would care to confess, still the general tone of his letter is true. He was not trying to circumvent criticism; he was only claiming for "Ghosts" the right to be judged logically. His error lay in the desire to present a real picture, for by doing so, he overworked reality, making it repulsive. The element of relief is wholly lacking in "Ghosts."

On January 24, 1882, Ibsen wrote:

"I was quite prepared for my new play eliciting a howl from the camp of the stagnationists, and I care no more for this than for the barking of a pack of chained dogs. But the alarm which I have observed among the so-called Liberals has given me cause for reflection."

Heretofore, Ibsen had been careful to observe an absolutely disinterested view of party politics; he refused to become identified with either side, although once before, in "The League of Youth," he had held the Liberals up to ridicule. Now that they were so rampant upon the subject of "Ghosts," he was once more concerned literarily with their so-called progressive hopes. At this point, therefore, we may note the germs of "An Enemy of the People."

"How about all these champions of liberty," Ibsen continued. ". . . Is it only in the domain of politics that the work of emancipation is to be permitted to go on with us? Must not men's minds be emancipated first of all? Men with such slave-souls as ours cannot even make use of the liberties they already possess. Norway is a free country, peopled by unfree men and women."

Undoubtedly, Ibsen realized that the play was rather daring; he must have set himself purposely to the task of removing those boundary posts of convention which were preventing the accomplishment of his "third empire," and he felt himself to have arrived at an age when it was requisite for him to forestall any possible attempt from men of the younger generation not so well equipped with experience. The opposition called forth by his play only served to emphasize the loneliness of his position, and the more he contemplated this isolation, the more depressed he became over the supposed liberalism of his country. As for the men of the party, "They would be poor fellows to man barricades with."

The faith Ibsen had, nevertheless, in the eventual outcome of the protesting storm, is emphasized in his letter of March 16, 1882, to Hegel: "All the infirm, decrepit creatures who have fallen upon the work, thinking to crush it, will themselves be crushed by the verdict of the history of literature. . . . The future belongs to my book. Those fellows who have bellowed so about it have no real connection with the life even of their own day."

Most of Ibsen's plays were published by Hegel

around the holiday season; the dramatist, therefore, had excellent reason, in the case of "Ghosts," to declare that in spite of Christmas being a time of peace, for him it was most generally far from that. His chief worry was over the fact that he was considered more in the light of a pamphleteer than of a playwright; that, as he confessed to Mr. Archer, in a drama of five characters there was thrust in a sixth, himself. It is natural that he should be irritated as he sat in the cafés and looked over the newspapers from the North.

Brandes calls the writing of "Ghosts" a noble deed; he even goes so far as to see in it a poetic treatment of heredity. But the inevitable monotone of the piece, its persistent, close, bare treatment of the disagreeable, all serve to give a harrowing impression. One is almost tempted to question whether such investigation is not better fitted for the medical profession than for the stage. I say this purely as a surface remark, understanding fully the idealism which prompted Ibsen to handle so dark a subject. He has out-Greeked the Greeks in his unerring unity of development. He traces the human tragedy as relentlessly, yet as calmly and as coldly, as he described years before the tragic end to the life of David, the friend of Brandes.

Let us look at the main outlines of this "family drama." Regina is safely ensconced in the Alving household as a maid; Oswald, a painter by profession, having been away for some time, has just returned; the carpenter, Engstrand, husband to Regina's mother, is in possession of the knowledge of his wife's transgressions; Pastor Manders is mov-

ing in the community with the proud consciousness that he is the guardian of duty as conceived by the Church and by the State. But it is Mrs. Alving who represents the heart's core of this tragedy of commonplace souls; in her we detect the epitome of the life lie.

Each act suggests the disclosure of fetid substance. No matter how Mrs. Alving may have lied to conceal the true disgrace of her husband's life, no matter how, by the erection of an orphanage to his memory, the gossips of society may have been hushed by this outward show, the mists rise from the depths, well-nigh obscuring the smallest glint of light.

Years before, Mrs. Alving had broken from her husband as Nora did from hers; the former had more physical cause to do so, for Alving was a degenerate. She fled to the Pastor's house, and he was instrumental in forcing her to return to her home. The sentimental feeling that existed between them only serves to show the shallow complacency of Manders. Then there occurred the moral downfall of the husband, and the cursed consequences bound up in Regina. Mrs. Alving resorts to the lie in order to protect her son.

In the meantime, after the death of Alving, his widow begins to awaken; her reading forces doubt into her mind—doubt as to the wisdom of her past actions, and as to the future solution. It is just this broadening process which Manders deplores when he comes to talk over the details of the Orphanage with her.[1] In him there is the selfish calcula-

[1] It is not necessary to accentuate the point which is over-

tion of a Torvald Helmer and the pious hypocrisy of a Rörlund.

By the manner in which Manders first greets Oswald, there is more than a presentiment that the boy is like his father in other ways than mere outward resemblances. In his conversation there is a show of absolute lack of any moral standard. The way he talks about his father presages ruin; the inconsequential manner in which he discusses free marriage—notwithstanding there is an element of truth in his statement that oftentimes these "irregular unions" are more stable and more decent than some of those based on moral law and order—is indicative of the atmosphere he has experienced in Paris.

To his surprise, Manders finds Mrs. Alving in sympathy with these views; for the first time she opposes her opinions to the clerical narrowness of the Pastor. During Alving's lifetime, he never came to their house; it was easy, in consequence, to deceive him as to the true state of affairs. But now he is told the plain facts about the dissolute condition of the man. What about Mrs. Alving's show of self-will? He has talked to her of her lack of endurance, of her desire to shirk her responsibilities as a wife and a mother. He has judged her solely by report, as he, with others like him, judges so many of the vital things in life.

All these years she has lived over a hidden abyss.

emphasized by Ibsen about the insurance of the new buildings. It is a theatrical subterfuge bound up in an attempt to symbolize the break of Mrs. Alving from the false bonds which have held her until the very moment the Orphanage, as the last public vestige of her husband's false excellencies, is burned to the ground.

She found it easy to keep from outsiders the true state of things—Alving's was a life which did "not bite upon his reputation." The ignominy his wife bore solely for the boy's sake; even the erection of the Orphanage was in order to keep the father's money from tainting Oswald.

At this moment, in the next room, the odours from the stagnant pool rise up. Regina and Oswald repeat the degradation of years before. In English we call this "Ghosts"; in French the word "Revenants" is nearer the meaning. Here we note symptoms of the double heredity; here Mrs. Alving is stricken with the horrible consequences of the lie.

It is in the second act that she states her position, thereby indicating what her spiritual side most craves. She is surrounded by evidences of her adherence to law and order. She is an example of what Nora's life might have been had Ibsen placed a Manders in the cast of "A Doll's House." It is the conventional law that does not avert the immoral conditions outside of law that has done the mischief. But her way to freedom is beyond Manders' understanding.

Why has she lied? Because of her superstitious awe for duty, the duty which Manders has preached to her. The Bible is wrong if it mean that a son should honour his parent notwithstanding he be a Chamberlain Alving. Is it right to foster a son's ideals in the face of truth? Manders has blinded himself to fact; he is a worldly man without a bit of subtle humanity about him; he learns of life second hand and quotes by rote the code arranged by convention. He does not consider the individual.

Heretofore Mrs. Alving has been timid because of her fear of ghosts. She has inherited from the past "all sorts of dead ideas and lifeless old beliefs," even as it further develops that Oswald, by the softening of his brain, is reaping the wild oats that his father sowed.

It was wrong for Manders to send her home when she left Alving that night; it was wrong for her to have gone. Her thinking, her so-called nihilism is the result of a right reaction against duty and obligations that are false. Manders is the sort of man the world usually calls upon for spiritual consolation. Is it right to heed any human being who is as easily duped as he is by the pretensions of such a reckless character as Engstrand, the carpenter? Mrs. Alving knows him to the core; she says: "I think you are, and will always be, a great baby, Manders."

Oswald's disclosure of his doom, of his living death, is a shocking instance of keen realism. His worm-eaten condition is another consequence of his mother's lie. Not knowing but that his father was a gentleman, the boy is racked with the thought that he alone is responsible for his condition. Then is seen the awful tragedy of his passion for Regina, the physical inheritance, the ghost of his father. When he, his mother, and the girl sit together sipping champagne, the furies of hell swirl round them. I know of no triple tragedy in literature compared with this; here we obtain Maeterlinck's forces of destiny in a dark room, in their fullest proportions and in their blackest colour.

What reason does Oswald give that Regina is his only salvation? We know that he is filled with the

joy of life; his paintings show that; his freedom in the outside world has shown that. If he remain with his mother his instincts might become warped. Now she sees clearly the sequence of things; now she would tell the truth.

And the truth fter the Orphanage is burned and Mar with Engstrand, who has completely p d over his eyes by a false attitude of r If you would have symbolism, the bu he Orphanage is one phase of Chamber ng's degeneracy, the burning up of Oswald and r; the forces of heredity cannot be averted after ey are set in motion.

Mrs. Alving tells Oswald and Regina the terrifying truth; her only excuse for the weakness of her husband is that he was one of the men filled with the joy of living, who, at home in a half-grown town, had no outlet for this overpowering energy; and she, educated in the light of narrow duty, could not meet his demands. Thus we see another instance of the undeveloped woman.

The breaking up of the play is not a solution; it is too palpably a dissolution. Regina, inheritor of some of Alving's *joie de vie*, goes out into the world, and to her ruin; Oswald faces the agony of his disease. The curtain drops at the moment night descends upon his reason. Some believe that his muttering "The sun, the sun," is a gleam of hope, that the truth is at last relieved of the blighting effect of the lie. At what a cost is the mora sphere cleared! Faguet, like most of the F ritics who regard Ibsen largely from the syn and-point, believes the sun indicative of the uf-

fering, the deliverance of any one, or any society from the curse of "neurasthenia." Brandes, however, is more likely correct, when he claims that Oswald, intent on asking for poison, had confused his thoughts with what he saw. It is a psychological and reasonable distinction.

The originality in "Ghosts" is threefold: in construction, in daring, in the tone it added to drama. In its way it marks an epoch in stage history, and sets a standard which assures Ibsen a unique place as a technician. But it is not "Ghosts" upon which his future reputation as a poet will depend. Somewhere Richard Hovey declared that Maeterlinck had created a new shudder; the same may be claimed for Ibsen. Yet I insist upon the constant iteration of the Ibsen impulse; a man who continually probes the inner crevices of conscience, of moral relations, cannot deal with the gilded crust. What misfortune, Ibsen seems to say, that fair humanity should be cursed by the cankers of man's own making; let us examine these cankers to see whether we cannot be rid of them.

It is the opinion of Lemaître that as opposed to the lightness of the French, the Scandinavians upset the world for an idea. There is something of the pagan force in Mrs. Alving, as there was later in the character of Rebecca West; the struggling to the surface of that old duality which racked Emperor Julian, and which was later to confront Rosmer in "Rosmersholm." Ibsen's psychology is, therefore, profound in its estimate of Mrs. Alving; so accurate, indeed, that it divests her of some of the humanity which encompassed Nora. So real is the

situation in "Ghosts," that the characterization is consumed in the flames of a consuming scientific fact.[1]

How weak and flabby is the customary moral theatrical tag by the side of this! Ibsen does not form a judgment, as some critics would have it; he allows a species of modern Fate to take care of the events which demand of him, as a conscientious playwright, a logical outcome. We instinctively feel, however, that this photographic exposition imposes upon Ibsen the necessity for an answer as to the meaning of Mrs. Alving's revolt. Boyesen questions whether, in her attitude, "goodness, in the accepted sense, is particularly laudable, and, on the whole, to be preferred to badness."

The English press went off at a tangent when "Ghosts" was presented at the London Independent Theatre on March 13, 1891;[2] every conceivable term of opprobrium was heaped upon it. As a piece of literature it is hard to find a more stark and naked bit of realism. In many ways it has had its influence on the present dramatic craft, and most positively it affected Ibsen. For he never again attained that height of steel-blue coldness. It might almost be claimed that having written "Ghosts," a certain feeling of revulsion against his own methods came over him.

[1] As F. P. Evans writes: "It is Calvinism, with the implacable law of descent substituted for the arbitrary will of God."

[2] See Archer's article in the *Fortnightly*, 60:77-91; also Shaw's "The Quintessence of Ibsenism." Here are a few of the expressions: Abominable, disgusting, bestial, loathsome, crapulous, offensive, scandalous, filthy, blasphemous, etc. See Shaw also in *The Saturday Review*, July 3, 1897; and the same author's "Dramatic Opinions."

CHAPTER XVII

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

THE Philistine always presents a sorry figure; he is always the "last by whom the new is tried"; he is the chief obstacle to advance; he is the chief enemy of the reformer; he is, in fact, the majority. Therefore, the resounding voices of disapproval at the time of the publication of "Ghosts," were those of the Philistines.

The germs of each one of Ibsen's plays may be found extending far back in his life. "An Enemy of the People" was assuredly hastened by the slander and contumely to which he was now subjected. The petty personalities which had been hurled at him when "Love's Comedy" appeared, came again with bitter and increased sting. Yet, as Ibsen was accustomed to do, he reaped strength and purpose from the fray.

Many years before, through the very loneliness of his position and through the struggle he experienced to maintain it, this solitary "franc tireur at the outposts"[1] had come to the conclusion "that the minority is always in the right."[2] His whole social attitude regarding the State and the Individual pointed to this; his determination to hold aloof from party design was further strengthened by the attitude of people towards "Ghosts," especially the "so-called Liberal press." Ibsen wrote to Brandes from Rome on January 3, 1882, concerning "these leaders of the people who speak and write of freedom of action and thought, and at the

[1] See Correspondence, 161.
[2] See Correspondence, 89.

same time make themselves the slaves of the supposed opinions of their subscribers."

"I receive more and more corroboration of my conviction," he continued, "that there is something demoralizing in engaging in politics and in joining parties. It will never, in any case, be possible for me to join a party that has the majority on its side. Björnson says: 'The majority is always right.' And as a practical politician he is bound, I suppose, to say so. I, on the contrary, must of necessity say: 'The minority is always right.' Naturally I am not thinking of that minority of stagnationists who are left behind by the great middle party which with us is called Liberal; but I mean that minority which leads the van, and pushes on to points which the majority has not yet reached. I mean that man is right who has allied himself most closely with the future."[1]

Here, then, is the keynote, the moving spirit for "An Enemy of the People"; Ibsen's letters are full of a certain despondency akin to hopelessness; he recognised the low standards at home, the sluggish intelligence, the aimless quarrel about liberties, where it was Liberty in principle which the country needed. The majority were crude in their ideas, plebeian in their demands. The philosophic view Ibsen took of democracy isolated him from the Liberal party; the democratic attitude he assumed toward his innate aristocratic inclinations cut him aloof from the Conservatives. In the first act of "Rosmersholm," where Kroll is being told of Rosmer's defection, the latter speaks of creating a true democracy whose

[1] See Correspondence, 158.

real task is "that of making all the people of this country noblemen."

We here have Ibsen's stand most poignantly marked. What is it that makes the majority plebeian? Verily, this lack of the element of nobility, or what Matthew Arnold might call the lack of culture. That this is one of the fundamental notes in his social doctrine may be inferred by the frequency with which he returns to it. During 1885, while on a visit to Christiania, Ibsen addressed at Drontheim a body of workingmen, who gave him a banner procession.[1] In part he said:

"Democracy alone cannot solve the social question. An element of aristocracy needs to be infused into our life. Of course, I do not mean the aristocracy of birth, or of the purse, or even the aristocracy of intellect. I mean the aristocracy of character, of will, of mind. That only can free us."

Therefore, what chiefly concerned Ibsen was to realize this aristocracy as an essential part of his "third empire"; inasmuch as he realized the possibility of this accomplishment among women and among the workingmen, they both would have his support, not because they were what they were, but solely because they were the classes in the social organism needing immediate support.

The discouraging aspect was the lack of any immediate signs of improvement. This only goes to show the immense bravery with which Ibsen persisted in his determined course. "They really do not need poetry at home," he wrote; "they get

[1] This was on June 14, 1885. See Brandes, Elias, Schlenther, ed., vol. i, p. 524, "An den Verein Drontheimer Arbeiter."

along so well with the *Parliamentary News* and the *Lutheran Weekly*." This was the common level of philistinism. And as for the peasant class, he found them equally bad in their ignorance, lacking in liberalism, wanting in self-sacrifice, jealous of their rights. The party of the "Left," the Liberals, were faint-hearted.

We therefore are made aware of the germs for two plays in these views; so consistently is the chain linked from first to last, that one might take "When We Dead Awaken" and block out the motives in it, reminiscent of previous plays. In fact, given "Pillars of Society" and the knowledge we have of Ibsen's political views, we might, on the very literalness of the title, build up "An Enemy of the People"—on the principle of Cuvier. For if society support such Pillars as Bernick, then such a staunch, upright, wholesome figure as Stockmann will be repudiated.

This play might almost be taken as a replica of Ibsen's own life, a dramatization of all he stood for. For years he had watched the cesspool of Norwegian life; existence was sorely in need of a thorough draining.[1] If anything higher in existence is to be striven for, the muck of civilization must first be willingly, and if not willingly, then forcibly, removed. The mind must be *convinced* that the necessary step should be taken to "eradicate all

[1] See Correspondence, 141. Among the younger playwrights, this idea of the Drain and Drainman has been carried out by Charles Rann Kennedy, in "The Servant in the House." Ibsen's symbolism, however, is not fraught with any elements of the morality.

that gloomy mediæval monasticism which narrows the view and stupefies the mind."

Having abandoned his idea of an autobiographical account of himself, Ibsen wrote Hegel on March 16, 1882, that he was preparing for a new drama, and that during the storm of protests over "Ghosts" he had made good use of the comedy situations that struck his sense of humour. One can almost conjure up his chuckle when he declared his intention of making a peaceable drama—one to be read by State councillors, rich merchants "and their ladies" without unnecessary shock!

The smoke of battle had an exhilarating effect upon him; Ibsen, the dramatist, was out for recreation, and he wrote so rapidly that by the time he reached Gossensass he was well on toward completing the manuscript. By September 9th he finished his task, with the usual regret at having to part with characters who assumed the proportions of reality to him. In fact, it is unmistakable the masquerading Ibsen did in "An Enemy of the People"; he threw around his own person the cloak of outward enthusiasm and recklessness; if any one asked him who was his model, he could turn to Jonas Lie, who spent a while with him in Gossensass, and call him Doctor Stockmann; or maybe, since he had become reconciled with Björnson, he could draw a little upon the spontaneous geniality of the latter.[1]

[1] According to the German editors of the Correspondence, Ibsen spent the summers of '76, '77, '78, '82, '83, '84, and '89 at Gossensass. It is natural that the place should honour the dramatist by having an "Ibsenplats" and a tablet on the house he occupied. See Archer's quotation from Paulsen, in Introduction, vol. viii: vii, of Complete Works.

But it was as markedly the voice of Ibsen, the propagandist, speaking in the fourth act of "An Enemy of the People," as it was Shaw, *alias* Tanner, in "Man and Superman," or Shaw, *alias* Napoleon, in "The Man of Destiny." The difference is that Ibsen's propagandism was not out of place, even though it was lacking in the brilliancy of Shaw's wit.

Naturally Dr. Stockmann and Ibsen would get on well. "We agree on so many subjects," writes the jocose dramatist to his publisher. "But the doctor is a more muddle-headed person than I am," he added naïvely. Two characteristics are to be noted in one paragraph of this letter where Ibsen asks to have a sentence altered in the play. "It probably occurs on the second page of the forty-third sheet of the manuscript." This is a fair example of the minute care he paid to detail; superficially it shows that he did not write upon single pages of paper.

Writing to Brandes, September 21st, Ibsen told him to expect, when reading "An Enemy of the People," to find many stray opinions already expressed in correspondence. But even though, knowing his attitude on so many phases of social life, we might be able to forestall the motive of this new play, the general snap and vigour of the action comes as a surprise after the close depression of "Ghosts," and the skill in characterization is wonderfully vital, even to the smallest occasional figure. Its originality, in this respect, is far above "Pillars of Society," and its general movement of plot decidedly more invigorating. Besides which, [redacted]ckmann was far above Bernick in naturalness

and in humanity. The former is a real person, the latter a mere figure.

A year elapsed between the publication of "Ghosts" and "An Enemy of the People." From now on, however, Ibsen was to work with a rhythmic regularity that resulted in a new play every two years—a sequence only broken by the delay in "When We Dead Awaken." In vital incident, his whole life was to be absorbed by his dramas; public expectancy exacted it, and his declining years demanded it, in view of his self-imposed mission.

Following the example of "Ghosts," Hegel issued an edition of 10,000 of the new play;[1] its popularity

[1] This accounts for the fact that a new edition was not required before April 28, 1897. It was auspicious, as Ibsen pointed out in a letter to Brandes, that the latter's "Second Impression" should have appeared close upon the issuance of "An Enemy of the People." In English, note translations by Mrs. Eleanor Marx-Aveling, published separately in "The Camelot Series," and in both editions of Archer. The American publishers have not reissued the former edition of Archer's "Ibsen," believing that the new and revised "Collected Works" should be considered as the authoritative source. A French translation was made by Ad. Chenevière and H. Johansen. Italian, Russian, Spanish versions are noted by Halvorsen. Among the Germans, see Wilhelm Lange, G. Morgenstern, M. von Borch, I. C. Poestion. Consult Laurent Tailhade: "Conférence sur l'Ennemi du Peuple," *Mercure de France,* 1894. The stage history shows the popularity of the piece; it was performed at the Christiania Theatre, Jan. 13, 1883; Copenhagen, March 4, 1883, with Emil Poulsen. Consult Lothar, "Ibsen" (1902), p. 113, for picture. On p. 106 is given a portrait of Petersen as Krogstad; on p. 105, Fru Hennings as Nora, and Poulsen as Helmer. A series of pictures on p. 128 shows Fru Marie Ramlo as Nora. A performance was given in Stockholm, March 3, 1883; Berlin, March 5, 1887 (Ostend Theatre); Berlin, Aug.

was instantly recognised throughout Scandinavia, and the tables were reversed as regards Germany, for "An Enemy of the People" was not given there until 1884. During the preparations for the Theatre Royal performance in Copenhagen, Ibsen, from Rome, was sending instructions to Fallesen (Correspondence, 168). Since the piece might be said to be lacking in romantic spirit, Ibsen wanted the rôle of Captain Horster to be played as a young man, and pitched in a key "to suggest the beginning of an intimate and warm friendship between himself and Petra." He was, moreover, desirous of retaining a contrast between Horster and Stockmann which would accentuate the importance of "the younger generation." "The Master Builder" was becoming inevitable. Moreover, his chief aim was to accentuate the lifelikeness of the ensemble. "Give the minor parts in the fourth act," he wrote, "to capable actors; the more figures you can have in the crowd that are really characteristic and true to nature, the better."

By the very fact that he was a fighter in the in-

1890 (Lessing Theatre); Berlin (Neues Theatre) March-April, 1894; for others, see Halvorsen. A London performance is recorded on June 14, 1893, Haymarket Theatre, given by Mr. Beerbohm Tree, who brought the piece to America. Another English production is recorded in Manchester on Jan. 27, 1894. Lugné-Poë appeared as Dr. Stockmann at the l'Œuvre, Nov. 9, 1893, and as a consequence of the performance, there were anarchistic riots. In 1895, Novelli added an Italian version to his repertoire. The propagandist spirit of the piece has been used to advantage by the Spanish Anarchists also. Madame Nazimova has played Petra, whom she regards as "the most advanced of Ibsen's women, but a straightforward character, easy to act."

tellectual vanguard, Ibsen knew that he could never have the majority with him; he must always, as he wrote to Brandes in June, 1883, be ten years in advance, and the majority would never catch up with him. This is the stand he gives to Stockmann, who, however blind to the small things in life, however forgetful of the practical things, at least saw the co-ordinating elements which reflected the true "spirit of the time." This was the counterpart of Ibsen.

It was Kierkegaard who iterated in his philosophy that "the strongest man in the world is he who stands alone." Contrast this statement with Bishop Nicholas's estimate of the greatest man in "The Pretenders"; the difference is that Ibsen's individualism has become more pronounced and more intellectual.

But we may well ask if Brand was the strongest man when he stood alone. Take the following of an Ideal relentlessly, until annihilation confronts us—standing alone, as the priest did, with a philosophy beyond human endurance. Ibsen proved conclusively that the end had to be disastrous. Now, he deals with a Brand reduced to terms of the man in the street, and endows him with an inscrutable civic sense. Stockmann's isolation is also the consequence of defeat. The philosophy of Kierkegaard is destroying, however much it may develop the soul.

Let us take another instance of contrast, and in so doing we arrive at a motive which prompted the writing of "The Wild Duck." I have previously traced the repeated appearance of the disquieting Lie in Ibsen's dramas; each time it brought misery in its

wake; fr a mere ripple it disturbed the whole surface. In "An Enemy of the People" Ibsen very conclusiv proves, from the standpoint of a small community, that even if the Lie flourish under the guise of "The Pillars of Society," the Truth will convert the citizen into "An Enemy of the People." Arrived at thi Ibsen satirized himself in "The Wi

The genera the new play is extraordinary; there e theatrical machinery left; but there is s quality in the dialogue, nowhere el bsen. The method so often employed th Dickens of fixing the vagaries of a character by the use of a catch phrase, is here employed in several instances, while the situation in which Stockmann slips on his brother's insignia of office and turns upon him, is fraught with a genial spirit of straight comedy.

But Ibsen could never long maintain an inconsequent manner; he is as persistent in his idea as the drip of water from a running faucet, and oftentimes, as is to be particularly noted in "An Enemy of the People," his curtain falls on the last act with a statement that he intends as the crux of the whole argument. "Pillars of Society" proclaims that Truth and Freedom are the fundamental foundations of civic life, while here Stockmann utters his slogan about the strongest man.

The whole plot hinges on the question of the Doctor's discovery that the "Baths," which are the mainstay and future hope of the little town in which he lives, are naught but poisonous whited-sepulchres. The moral status of the place is the same as that in

"Pillars of Society"; in fact, Ibsen carries over the characters from one to the other of the plays. Rörlund holds forth in the school with his silly beliefs; Stensgård has previously realized some of his political ambitions; Aslaksen, the printer, one of those mortals lukewarm and hypocritical under the guise of moderation, moves on the scene with the same cringing manner.

The Burgomaster happens to be Stockmann's brother, an official of the kind that always calls forth from Ibsen the full vent of his satire. "The fine spirit of mutual tolerance" that he speaks of, is the kind usually underlying the shallow surface of an average community. Therefore, with this spirit on one side, and the honest determination on the other, the struggle that ensues between the two brothers is representative of the Ibsen clash.

As an official of the "Baths," Stockmann is supposed to recant his accusations, but he refuses to do so. There is hypocrisy everywhere in town; Petra finds it in the school and in the home, her father is made to feel its presence in the civic life. At first he is surrounded by the liberal press, which promises him support; the editors even go further and discover that the town, as well as the "Baths," is rotting in its municipal life, the chief object being on their part to explode the tradition of official infallibility, to demand a share in the direction of affairs, to uproot the worship of authority. Even Aslaksen promises what he calls the backing of the "compact majority."

Then the Burgomaster confronts his brother and shows his dishonesty by declaring that the Doctor's

discovery must be kept back for the good of the community. Even though the infection of the "Baths" was originally due to the foolhardy action of the officials, they now hesitate over the expense which would have to be incurred to remedy the evil, and which they know would fall heavily upon the shoulders of individual members of the Board. Through the skilful manœuvring of "officialdom," the public press is eventually led to believe by the Burgomaster that the brunt would have to be met by the town.

Whatever the consequences, Stockmann knows for a fact that the "Baths" are poisonous, and he is determined to live up to his convictions that the public must be dealt with honestly and squarely; as a citizen his duty is to communicate his discovery forthwith to the community. To the winds with the old recognised ideas, to the winds with the exploded theory that an official has no right to individual conviction! He does not care what the technical and economic dangers are; they are nothing compared with the menace confronting the town in other ways.

Dr. Stockmann, impetuous and headstrong though he be, will not stand by and see gain come to the people through traffic in filth; if the town flourish on the "Baths" in their present condition, then it flourishes on a lie. The Burgomaster in imperturbable manner shows his officiousness; his one object is to have his brother contradict the rumours. He appeals to Mrs. Stockmann, who has conservative beliefs, but naught can overcome the determination of the Doctor to stick to right and truth. He does so, even when he finds himself discharged, his daughter losing her school position, his house stoned and

himself branded as the enemy of society, when in truth he would save it. He will do what is right, so that when his sons are grown they may inherit the full spirit of true men.

The Doctor is further inspired in his inscrutable course by the cowardly action of the press; Ibsen is particularly relentless about the weak-livered editors. At first believing fully in the support of the liberal papers, Stockmann sends them a rousing article about the "Baths"; they become so enthusiastic over his disclosures that they determine to smite the very foundations of their corrupt society; it is not only the "Baths" which need cleansing! They turn deaf ears to Aslaksen, the man who carries moderation to cowardly excess. And, after all, what is the moderation? In substance, Aslaksen is willing to attack the Government, for that does society no harm; but he is a slave to local authority, simply because it involves the question of self-interest.

On this foundation, it is easy to detect an element of weakness in the so-called liberal-minded editors, and Petra soon has this fact brought to her regard with full force. She comes to Hovstad, the editor, refusing to translate a certain English novel for him (has any commentator ventured to locate what novel?), since it has certain false standards of divine justice, for which neither she, nor, as she believes, the paper will stand. Not only does Hovstad show that the editorial policy is forced to be palliative in some of its views, but he also convinces her, by accident, that his interest in her father is solely his interest in her. Ibsen's women are not made of flabby stuff—that is, not since he freed himself from

the roma tic cloak. Petra believes tenaciously in the bravery f her father; beside it Hovstad appears small his opinions prompted by self-interest!

Then comes the Burgomaster to call upon the Press; he slips in the back way and soon grasps the situation as other's article. So he plays his tru the expense that would devolve upon ase the "Baths" were remedied. Se enters to change the course of thi ets of the Liberals are touched, and cide to relinquish the Doctor's paper i the Burgomaster's article, giving the facts as ie Board of Directors would have them given.

Suddenly the Burgomaster is forced to hide in an anteroom, for the figure of the Doctor looms up in the distance. Now it is that Stockmann suspects something brewing; he sees the hesitancy on the faces of the editors when he inquires about the proofs for his article; he sees it in their general bearing, when he is followed by his wife, beseeching him to act in moderation for the sake of his family; he knows it definitely when he discovers his brother's cap and cane. The farce element is strong in the scene between the Burgomaster and the Doctor—but it immediately changes, when the latter realizes how he has been side-tracked. Neither he nor the truth can be crushed. What does it matter if every one refuse to print his article, he will read it at a mass meeting; he will proclaim it from the housetops; he will fight to the bitter end.

This is what he proceeds to do: at the mass meet-; however, he is confronted by an unexpected or-

deal. So skilfully has the Burgomaster laid his schemes, that with his parliamentary juggling, he not only forces Aslaksen's election as chairman, but likewise marshals events so that a vote is taken prohibiting the Doctor from speaking about the "Baths" at all. In conciliatory tones Aslaksen says: "I, too, am in favour of self-government by the people, if only it doesn't cost the ratepayers too much." Even the papers must be cautious, for, as Hovstad declares, it is the duty of the editor to work in harmony with his readers!

Stockmann turns the table. The "Baths," he says, are a mere bagatelle, an insignificant item compared with his larger discovery. What are the poisoned water-works beside the rancid sources of spiritual life upon which society is based? His illusions are gone—he sees "the colossal stupidity of the authorities" blocking the path of the free man; his brother Peter, he publicly declares, is a good example. These respected dignitaries are relics of the old order which is surely at the point of death; but they are not to be feared. In thundering tones the Doctor, *alias* Ibsen, says: "The most dangerous foe to truth and freedom in our midst is the compact majority."

The consternation created by this attack does not disconcert the good old Doctor; he withstands all contradictory interruptions. What the majority has, he avers, is might, not right; they are narrow-chested, lacking in pulsating red blood. Stockmann well-nigh quotes from Ibsen's letters, so near is his speech to the opinions sent in communications to Brandes. The men who stand for truth, stand alo

a normally constituted truth lives twenty years, and then must be modified. Thick and fast his aphorisms fall upon the astounded gathering; he would rather see his native town in ruin than flourishing on a lie! He declares, in fact, that he is a revolutionist in the sense that he is in revolt against the accepted lie "that truth belongs exclusively to the majority."

In reading this fourth act of "An Enemy of the People," one is keenly reminded of the wit in Shaw's "Maxims for Revolutionists." There is one saying in the latter that aptly applies here: "Democracy substitutes election by the incompetent many for appointment by the corrupt few." Such shafts of wit and truth emanate also from Dr. Stockmann. "Truths are by no means the wiry Methuselahs some people think them," he says, adding quickly that "all these majority-truths are like last year's salt pork."

What is the majority, he questions, but the devil's own? Their truths are marrowless, and do they expect society to exist upon such an antique rubbish heap? The old Doctor—Ibsen was now fifty-four—has the vigour of a boy, and he likewise reflects the natural aristocratic tendencies of his creator, to be so prominently accentuated in the character of Rosmer. The intellectual few, not the ignorant mass, are the ones who count; the mass is so much raw material to be fashioned into a people. The minority are the cultivated, the majority the uncultivated, elements in society. "Do you think the brain of the poodle isn't very differently developed from that of the mongrel?" he queries. He does not mean by common people, the lower classes, any more than

those at the summit of society; he means those in whom "the commonness still lingers," those who have not worked their way up "to spiritual distinction." His brother Peter is such a man.

The consequences resulting from this speech are seen in the disordered condition of the Doctor's study, which is the scene for the last act—broken windows, scattered stones and the like. Truly, as the old gentleman says, when he discovers a rent in his clothes, "A man should never put on his best trousers when he goes out to battle for freedom and truth." The people who fall away from him are those who dare not do otherwise; they are slaves to party, they are not friends of freedom. At first Stockmann is inclined to leave it all and to go to America; he will let them wallow in their pig-sty if they can thus without compunction stone a patriot. He is in a mood for defining everything. "A party," he says, "is like a sausage machine; it grinds all the brains together in one mash, and that's why we see nothing but porridge-heads and pulp-heads all around." Do you remember the Mayor's injunction to Brand about currying his whole flock with the same comb? Ibsen, the Individualist, cannot be hidden under a bushel.

Even to the last, Stockmann is firm in his bearing toward the Burgomaster, yet Ibsen is not so lacking in his human estimate as to make him immovable. With wonderful skill in sketching he introduces the old figure of Mrs. Stockmann's adoptive father, whose money is eventually to be left to his family, but whose tannery is one of the causes for the evil befalling the "Baths." Toward the end

Morter iil announces that most of his small fortune is t l up in "Bath" shares; that if the attack on sanita ion is continued by the Doctor, the value of these holdings will depreciate, will dwindle to nothing. For once only does Stockmann hesitate, bethinking hin antidote might relieve the situation ke manner Brand once hesitated rega ompromise.

But in the ctor sees how the souls of these petty m moment to moment, he determines to he field of battle and fight. What is it shall fight? First, he wishes to convince the peo that "the Liberals are the craftiest foes that free men have to face"; second, "that party programmes wring the necks of all young and living truths"; and, finally, "that considerations of expediency turn justice and morality upside down." He will open a school and train the younger generation to continue the work of emancipation after him.

The play thus ends sharply and suddenly; there is no rounding out of individual aims; there is no love element to linger upon; there is no decrease in energy. What saves it from being merely an exposition of Ibsen's opinion is the characterization, which is dealt with minutely; the cameo sketches are instinct with warmth and individuality.

It is surprising that "An Enemy of the People" is not better known to the stage in America; in its social attitude it is significantly close to conditions in this country; its general energy is akin to our national activity. In fact, Ibsen may be said to ve depended on his strength, both in idea and in

character, through this accentuation of attitude. Even Petra, epitome of feminine frankness and courage, is thus portrayed, not by any psychological subtlety, but by firm strokes, dependent on the manner in which she responds to outward demands made upon her. She is the continuation of Lona, with the spirit of youthfulness breathed into her. Hilda, in "The Master Builder," is to be much like this in substance, only, when she makes her appearance, Ibsen will have dealt with the subtle femininity of Rebecca West and Hedda Gabler.

For the satisfaction of those who read symbolism into everything termed "modern drama," we might record here a lurking suspicion that Ibsen was trying hard to invest "An Enemy of the People" with some of the hidden meaning of the symbol. It is straining a point to range Hedda Gabler by the side of her pistol and call the latter a sign of her character; it is still more difficult to reason sensibly, however picturesquely, on the theory of Nora and the open door! Only when we are dealing with thoroughly apparent things like the poisoned "Baths" and the poisoned sources of society, can we stretch a point in favour of the symbol. For while it is exciting to trace hidden meanings, it is dangerous, inasmuch as, when extravagantly used, they distort vision.

There is strikingly evident an element of debate in this drama—more so than in any other of Ibsen's; a broad view of life is here struggling in a local atmosphere, which bases its evidence of material improvement on a family's relish of roast beef, that the Burgomaster considers extravagant; even as in "Hedda Gabler," the heroine's plebeian tastes are

seen in her ambition to ride in a carriage of her own. Ibsen's art, however, forces the reader to take each character upon his individual worth, which is either strengthened or weakened by the general thesis of the drama. His characters primarily stand out in connection with certain fundamental principles; in themselves, spiritually, they do not irradiate humanity in the manner of Shakespeare; they are nearer akin to Molière.

Barring a few excesses in the exuberance of Doctor Stockmann, "An Enemy of the People" is a poignant rejoinder to those liberal voices raised in protest against "Ghosts."

CHAPTER XVIII

IBSEN THE FEMINIST

For the sake of proper grouping it is necessary to change the order of the Ibsen plays that follow. We might take them in their regular succession, and find, as we have found heretofore, how closely the links connect the idea of one with the other. But Ibsen's play-writing could be likened to a case of literary atavism; once he had used an incident, or suggested a motive, he almost always either amplified it in a later drama, or applied it to the conditions of modern life.

We have already reached some conception of Ibsen's ripening viewpoint as regards women—how it changed from a conception of romantic weakness and dependence and sacrifice to a declaration of rights. There are two of his characters, however, who are even more intensive in respect to the feminine traits than either Nora or Mrs. Alving. The deeper penetration which developed in him appears to have demanded an additional quality to his technique—the infusion of a subtle influence by which the past life is made active in the present. This new force is to be seen both in "Rosmersholm" and in "Hedda Gabler."

By following the plays in their succession, however, we are impressed with the consistency and progressive surety of Ibsen's ideas. We did not quite grasp the full significance of "Brand" and "Peer Gynt" until we had reached the import of "Emperor and Galilean"; the latter does not seem quite so close to the spirit of modern times until we are shown its influence working in contemporary char-

acters, as in "Rosmersholm." A consideration of "The Wild Duck" after "An Enemy of the People" would have driven home the danger of imposing one's ideals upon people not prepared for them, a proposition carried over, to a limited extent, into "Rosmersholm," which drama in its turn shows decided indications of a reaction against the stark and naked realism of "Ghosts" and the matter-of-factness of "Pillars of Society" and "An Enemy of the People." It is the return of the poet to the realm of poetry through the medium of symbolism—slight use of which has already been noted in "Brand" and "Peer Gynt."

Yet, concise though he may have been in technique, and in the almost ruthless manner in which he followed consequences, Ibsen, as a dramatist, was distinctly subject to vagaries; he allowed certain reckless elements to creep into his plays, betokening a quality of mind which was anything but scientific —one might almost deem it fantasy—but one would be correct in identifying it with a romantic grotesqueness. Ulric Brendel in "Rosmersholm," the Rat Wife in "Little Eyolf," and a Stranger in "The Lady from the Sea," are all indicative of this trait.

But we are justified in grouping the plays differently, so as to emphasize those dominant traits in the development of Henrik Ibsen which will best show him in full proportions. So far we have attempted to unfold all those qualities which characterize him as a dramatist, and the remaining points fall, to our view, definitely under three heads. A new phase of the feminine is to be seen in "Rosmersholm" and "Hedda Gabler"—in which women are developed

from the inside rather than from the outside: in which conditions are imposed upon them or impressed upon them spiritually and temperamentally, rather than socially. Society does not in any way affect Rebecca West; her reaction is due to her individual growth.

The second grouping deals with Ibsen's use of the symbol—a dangerous characteristic for a poet to employ, and one in which he was least skilful when he set out conscientiously to introduce it into his plays; it was an element of artistic weakness in him; as a separate element, woven into a segment of every-day life, it became too apparent an effort to adopt again the poetry of his first period. In no way can we believe that by symbolism Ibsen ever hoped to reconcile the literalness of "An Enemy of the People" and the scientific analysis of "Ghosts," with the fantastic imagery of "Peer Gynt" or the noble poetry of "The Pretenders."

Finally, there is the gathering of strength in "The Master Builder," in which the symbol loses some of its obscuration by reason of its philosophic value; followed by the gradual decrease of surety through "John Gabriel Borkman" and "When We Dead Awaken." And by the very fact that in his "Epilogue" Ibsen tried to gather together the threads of his life work, the more easily are we able, in the light of what he had done before, to arrive at some idea of wherein lay the causes of his strength and of his weakness.

In the order of composition the plays run as follows:

The Wild Duck—1884.

Rosmersholm—1886.

The Lady from the Sea—1888.
Hedda Gabler—1890.
The Master Builder—1892.
Little Eyolf—1894.
John Gabriel Borkman—1896.
When We Dead Awaken—1899.

In December, 1881, Mr. William Archer first met Ibsen at the Scandinavian Club in Rome. There came before him an undersized man, with broad shoulders, who, as he walked, bent from his waist on account of his poor eyesight. His head was large, his body stockily built and clad in a long black frock coat, with its broad lapels, and its little knot of red ribbon, as an indication of his liking for decorations; from behind his gold-rimmed spectacles a pair of blue eyes pierced everything that came within the field of view. The popular conception Mr. Archer[1] had previously received of the dramatist's bearishness, faded before a decided tone of "ceremonious, old-world courtesy." Ibsen's chief source of contact with people or things outside of himself came from close observation. While in Munich and in Rome he spent much time reading his newspaper as he sat by the window of the café, occasionally looking up to follow some passer-by or to emit a terse answer to a stray question.

Arthur Symons writes: "The rhythm of a play of Shakespeare speaks to the blood like wine or music. . . . But the rhythm of a play of Ibsen is like that of a diagram of Euclid; it is the rhythm of logic, and it produces in us the purely

[1] See "Ibsen as I Knew Him," William Archer. *Reader, 8 : 185-197*, July, 1906.

mental exaltation of a problem solved." It is this very contemplation of questions which required some psychological sequence, and some semblance of scientific explanation, which drew Ibsen so irretrievably away from poetry. He felt it himself, and many letters in his correspondence for 1883 indicate how wide was the gap between his manipulation of the two forms of expression. In the Fall of that year some of his time was consumed in planning ahead for Sigurd; having received his legal training in Rome, the latter was open to an appointment for a diplomatic position, provided he became naturalized. But this his father was loath for him to do, knowing full well all that it meant to cut aloof from one's country; therefore the appeal in his son's behalf was as much to preserve his Norwegian citizenship as to settle him pecuniarily.

During the winter Ibsen kept much to himself, reading quite a little of the current literature mailed to him by Hegel. In March, 1884, he, together with Björnson, attached his name to an address to the Storthing relative to the passage of a Married Woman's Property Bill, but not until 1888 was the attempt to force the matter to a successful issue brought to a close.

A letter to Björnson, dated from Rome, March 28, 1884, shows that political irritation in Ibsen which was to become so emphasized when he next visited Norway. He was a pagan as far as politics were concerned; he did not believe much in the theoretical reforms which were talked about; the immediate need of the nation was practical, and to that end, he wanted to see a wide extension of the suffrage

improvement of the legal status of the woman, and the cutting of education aloof from the old methods of mediævalism. Ibsen thus foresaw, indeed forecast, what later actually was accomplished by the Government. Even in the question of parties, he was seized with the desire to apply his theory of the "third empire." For between the Right and the Left, he would have a Centre party, technically called "The Moderate."

By June 25, 1884, he had completed the first sketch of "A Wild Duck," and was planning to go to Gossensass, where he intended to finish it. Toward the close of the summer, so thoroughly had the old cordial feeling with Björnson returned, that Ibsen paid him a short visit at Schwarz, only a few hours' ride from Gossensass. About September 29th there was proposed to him the possibility of returning to the management of a Norwegian theatre, and it was a temptation, for Ibsen was a born theatre director. It had occurred to him often that probably his duty was to return to Christiania and further the theatrical cause with his own strong initiative; but to do this he would have to sacrifice something of his pecuniary gain, since his literary work would in consequence suffer. He would give himself another year to think it all over; but to relinquish any gain, unless it was made up to him by governmental grant, appeared preposterous. This grant would not be too much for politicians to vote for the authors in Norway who were so unfeignedly and so persistently "awakening men's minds." This restlessness foreshadows Ibsen's attitude when he did return homeward.

"What I feel is that I should not be able to write freely and frankly and unreservedly there," he said; ". . . When, ten years ago, after an absence of ten years, I sailed up the Fjord, I felt a weight settling down on my breast, a feeling of actual physical oppression. . . . I was not myself under the gaze of all those cold, uncompromising Norwegian eyes at the windows and in the streets."

As for the theatre situation, he denied all rumours to the effect that he would accept the directorship, at the same time expressing in emphatic terms his belief that the State and Municipality should raise the status of the playhouse from its present feebleness.

In April, 1885, he was suggesting the possibility of travelling to the Lake of Constance in order to plan out his new play; he was about to leave Rome for good, and was debating whether he should not take another year in Germany; this step would at least bring him nearer home, and then, probably, he would the better accomplish his idea of purchasing a villa near Christiania, where, cut off from everybody, he might devote his entire time to work. There he could have a continual glimpse of the sea; there, likewise, he might attempt another play in poetic form, for he often declared that he should like his last piece to be in that medium.

The influence of party politics was felt in every direction; as it permeated the theatre situation and the literary situation, so it likewise became involved in personal considerations. This Ibsen found to be the case when he left in June, 1885, for his second trip to Norway; much hollow rhetoric was resorted

to by the politicians, and questions relating to the extent of the king's power to veto consumed the attention over and above more important topics. The very nobility which Ibsen was most anxious to infuse, was further away, and discussions fell into petty innuendoes. All these elements served to disappoint and irritate the visitor; and that is probably why, when he came to address the Trondhjem workingmen,[1] he laid such stress upon that desire for nobleness which entered so markedly into "Rosmersholm." He emphatically declared that everywhere it seemed the land was peopled, "not by two million human beings, but by two million cats and dogs."

The desire of the Norwegians to force Ibsen into declaring his preference for a party, came well-nigh involving him in a disagreeable experience, during which a demonstration against him was made by the Norwegian students of the Right or Conservative faction. The ill-feeling was caused by Ibsen's refusal to receive a torchlight procession planned in his honour by the Student's Union; in fact, he had also declined to receive the Workmen's Association for fear of being misunderstood; but his motives were distorted, and, because he tried to be a little facetious, his actions were misinterpreted. The Liberals assumed that by this dispute Ibsen was evidently declaring himself for the "Left," no one seeing that he was really exerting every effort to

[1] The speech in Brandes, Elias, Schlenther ed., vol. i, p. 524. For a discussion of the political quarrels, see Archer's introduction to "Rosmersholm," p. ix (condensed from an article, *Fortnightly Review*, Sept., 1885). The battle ended in a Liberal victory.

escape entanglement of any sort.[1] The very fact that the argument continued for some time is indicative of the small-mindedness of the people, but Ibsen had the satisfaction of knowing that a large mass meeting of students favourable to him was held on October 16th. In this demonstration he witnessed "a confirmation of a hope which I have never relinquished—the hope that the great majority of the students of Norway, and of Europe generally, are really in league with the struggling, clarifying, ever-progressive life-forces in the domains of science, art, and literature."

On February 14, 1886, Ibsen wrote to his friend, Count Carl Snoilsky, whom he styled Scandinavia's "greatest living lyric poet," announcing that he was busily engaged on his new drama,[2] "for which

[1] See Correspondence, 188.

[2] "Rosmersholm" was published on November 23, 1886, in an edition of 8,000. An English translation was made by Louis N. Parker (1889); one by Charles Archer (1891). In French by M. Prozor; in German by M. v. Borch (1887); by A. Zinck (1887); by Ernst Brausewetter (1890); by J. Engeroff (1893). See *Nineteenth Century*, 26 : 254 (1889—W. Frewen); 30 : 258 (1891—H. A. Kennedy); *Fortnightly*, 51 : 118 (1889—E. Gosse); "L'Année littéraire de 1891" (P. Ginisty). See musical settings by Richard Strauss (1896). Among the many parodies mentioned by Halvorsen, see Anstey Guthrie's "The Pocket Ibsen" (1895). Among the theatre performances, note: Bergen, January 17, 1887; Christiania Theatre, April 12, 1887 (Constance Bruun as Rebecca). In Denmark, performances were given by Lindberg, November 28, 1887. The play reached Germany through Augsburg, April 6, 1887; Berlin, May 5, 1887; Vienna, May 4, 1893; Hamburg, April, 1898; Stuttgart, Oct. 24, 1896; Munich, May 4, 1893. English productions: Vaudeville Theatre, London, February 23, 1891, with F. R. Benson and Florence Farr; Opera Comique, June 2, 1893, with

I made careful studies during my visit to Norway last summer." He had little to interrupt him, for Sigurd was settled and ready to sail for Washington, D. C., where he was to be one of the attachés at the Legation. Later on in the month Ibsen was writing to Director Fallesen of the Theatre Royal, claiming that there was little chance of his play being completed before the autumn; but instead, he was offered "Love's Comedy" and "Ghosts," the latter having by now won its way sufficiently for Ibsen to make the proposal. But "Ghosts" was destined to be held back from Copenhagen until 1903.

In this same month, Ibsen was discussing Jæger's desire to write a biography, and as an illustration of how carefully the former treasured the small details about himself, a letter of February 25, 1886, enumerates the numerous photographs and busts made of him during the years. At first Ibsen was inclined to eye suspiciously the data gathered by Jæger, inasmuch as the latter had not at first applied to him personally for assistance, but later he had occasion to alter his opinion. Nevertheless, it is clearly noticeable how anxious Ibsen was to have a new biog-

Lewis Waller and Elizabeth Robins. According to Archer and Halvorsen, Austin Fryers produced at the Globe Theatre a prologue to "Rosmersholm" called "Beata," London, 1892.

At l'Œuvre, in Paris, the play was given on October 4, 1893, and was brought to London in 1895. The rôle of Rebecca was very effectively played by Eleonora Duse. In New York, it was first given on March 28, 1904, at the Princess Theatre, by a company known as the Century Players, including Florence Kahn; during the season of 1907-8, Mrs. Fiske, at the Lyric Theatre, New York, added the play to her repertoire. Consult Lothar, Brandes, and Jæger.

raphy of himself, in view of the fact that his sixtieth birthday was approaching.

After a silence of more than a year he wrote to Brandes on November 10, 1886, less than a fortnight before "Rosmersholm" was published; he speaks of having been "tormented" by a play; this was probably due to distracting thoughts still clinging to him of his trip to Norway. "I had to come to a distinct understanding of the whole," he said, "and draw my conclusions before I could think of transforming the experiences into fiction."

All during the writing of "Rosmersholm" his mind was intent on the weak character of the Liberals; some may regard his criticism as a hopeless view of the situation, but that was far from the actual case; his one thought was that "All this crude immaturity may some day clarify into both the substance and the outward form of genuine civilization." But his fear was that Norway did not care, nor did she have much force within her to accomplish reforms of permanent worth.

Early in 1887 he left Munich to attend certain productions of "Ghosts" in Berlin, where he was honoured and fêted despite the determined stand taken by the authorities against his play. The opposition was more than compensated for by the realization that "Ghosts" had "become a burning literary and dramatic question in Germany." Further decorations were bestowed upon him.

After the appearance of "Rosmersholm," it was read before a debating club in Christiania, a clear indication of how seriously Norwegians took their literary matters; and afterwards a letter of thanks

was written Ibsen. In turn he sent a letter to the chairman in which, while he confessed he saw in "Rosmersholm" "the call to work," he recognised in it above all else "the struggle which all serious-minded human beings have to wage with themselves in order to bring their lives into harmony with their convictions." Rosmer this is more applicable than in the Rebecca.

Clearly, to Ibsen's thinking, the whole conflict of the piece lay ircumstance that "the different spiritual functions do not develop evenly and abreast of each other in any one human being. The instinct of acquisition hurries on from gain to gain. The moral consciousness—what we call conscience—is, on the other hand, very conservative. It has its deep roots in tradition and the past generally."

The interest in "Rosmersholm" is purely psychological, and for that reason its understanding requires careful following, even when externalized on the stage. That English scribe who, in an added prologue, tried to explain the incidents leading up to the first act of the play, was only attempting to take away from the close demand which Ibsen makes upon the attention. The characters develop by slow change, not by any striking exterior scene. The shades of meaning in the dialogue have to be focussed by the reader upon the active conscience of Rosmer and the awakened spirit of Rebecca. The one who profits by the freedom of the situation is the woman, who in the beginning enters the conservative house of Rosmersholm as an adventuress, and the end leaves it in a far different temper.

With a broader and coarser brush Pinero took a woman of the Iris type, and wilfully dragged her to destruction, intent on watching the outcome. It was a melodramatist's absorption in a species of vivisection. Ibsen, on the other hand, adopted the method of philosophy; each sentence is like a live wire, bridging the past with the present; we feel instinctively the inborn nobility of Rosmer, bred of a line of Conservatives, upon whom the community bases its idea of right and wrong; Rebecca throbs with that nervous jealousy which is evidence of the unconscious struggle taking place between the wild pagan or ultra-radical elements within her. The drama deals with the dual conflict which Ibsen wished always to show was occurring in nature—the "Emperor and Galilean" struggle leading to the "third empire."

Take a man of Rosmer's training and free him suddenly of the traditional harness; persuade him that the unrestricted intercourse between himself and Rebecca is fraught with purity, and he is in a frame of mind to deceive himself, in his innocence, that the world is ill-bred to think scandal and plebeian to sling mud. But with the traditions of generations behind him, once disturb that idea of innocence,—as Kroll, representative of conventional morality and narrow-mindedness, did when he revealed to Rosmer why Beata went the way of the mill-dam,—and all Rebecca's efforts at emancipation have been in vain.

Take a woman of Rebecca's inclinations; through her passion for Rosmer, have her force Beata to kill herself, thereby freeing Rosmer of one barrier, one hindrance to his progress; have her train him in

mental bearing to the appreciation of advanced ideas—such an individual has no scruples, either as to the means by which an end is accomplished, or as to the consequences, apart from the satisfaction of her desire. But take that same woman, and have her subtly changed in spirit by the conventional nobility of the Rosmer tradition—her passion turned to real love, her nature awakened to its better possibilities, —and she is no longer the epitome of emancipation; her weapons of defence are taken from her.

Kroll is such a man as Ibsen found the average citizen on his return to Norway, one who believed that opposition to a way of thinking should mean onslaught upon character; he follows blindly the traditional dictates of society; he fights by any means whatever defection there may be. On the other hand, Mortensgård, who, in his past, has been ostracized for very much the same indiscretion as was occurring between Rosmer and Rebecca, has arrived at that stage of a conventional liberalism, where he realizes that his party needs some of the Christian nobility that Rosmer's family name can supply. That is why, when he is told of the latter's apostasy, he wishes to keep silent whatever gossip might tarnish that nobility which they so much desire.

The setting of "Rosmersholm" is, therefore, commonplace—with the same atmosphere by which Ibsen is popularly known; it is the inner life of the piece that is different. According to Mr. Archer, the mere crust was supplied to Ibsen in various directions. First, about the time the drama was formulating, a Swedish nobleman of Rosmer's bearing, married to an unsympathetic wife, was drawn to a

female relative, and the relations existing between them called forth venomous attacks from the press. According to another source, Rebecca was built upon the model of a young woman who committed suicide, in the effort to stir up the intellect of her husband, whom she wildly imagined to be in need of this sacrifice. Still another authority suggests that the conception of Ulric Brendel was founded upon a character met by Ibsen in Italy, who held the opinion that true works of genius were never committed to paper. But does it not strike one as of little importance where the crust was moulded? From now on there is a critical effort to "locate" Ibsen in external happenings; these should be recorded as a matter of personal history, but as a matter of enlightening interpretation they are of little value.

The play is neither wholly matter-of-fact, nor predominantly theoretical; the civic element is strong, but it is counterbalanced by a deep vein of passion. The equation is represented on one side by Rosmer, product of an established household, almost with patriarchal ideas; on the other by Rebecca, in whom the desire for lust is strongest. Had Rosmer been born to lead men, Rebecca's call to his ambition might have resulted in his accomplishing what he had planned to do with humanity. But they both became unnerved by the development of new traits within each of them; and she, suddenly realizing the necessity for sacrifice, and he, the necessity for expiation, they go to their death the way Beata went, following in name, if not in execution, the Catholic demand. The play is thus a life of transforming souls in which pagan and Christian elements are seeking to mix

gle, and in which both elements become greatly altered.

This is not a play of much visible intrigue. When the first act begins Rebecca West, subtle, crafty and lustful, has in one way accomplished her will; she has wormed herself into Rosmersholm, she has driven Rosmer's wife to suicide, she has well-nigh mastered the situation. Her scheme works up to a point she herself had not counted upon—that is, the deepening change in her own spirit; nor had she calculated rightly in her dealings with the Rosmer conscience, once it was made clear by Kroll how the world in general would regard the intimate associations between an emancipated woman and a freethinker. When that spirit of innocence deserts the man, his inherited prejudices stir within him, and Rebecca's plan falls like a palace built of cards.

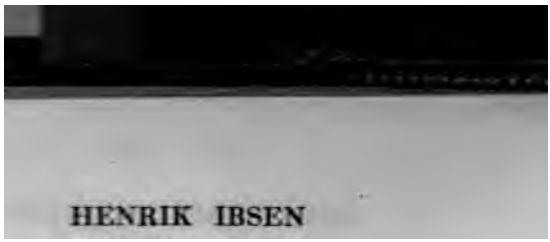
The forces in "Rosmersholm" are more elusive than those in "Ghosts." There one had a definite cause for the cataclysm, but here it permeates the whole fabric; in fact, it is the fabric itself. We have an opposition of forces—a new life against an old life—a new order of morals against the old order. Rosmer says to the Pastor: "You do not believe that purity of mind is to be found among the unbelieving and the emancipated? You do not believe that morality may be an instinctive law of their nature?" And Kroll's direct answer to this is: "I have no great faith in the morality that is not founded on the teachings of the Church."

Ibsen's wonderful poise in this drama is felt throughout; each side is dealt with carefully and exactly, with fine shadings; such, for instance, as

make us feel a certain respect for the ultra-conservatism of Kroll, and a decided contempt for the calculating liberalism of Mortensgård. It is also realized, to a wonderful degree, in the active influence of Beata throughout the scenes—an influence which, in one respect, prevents Rebecca from marrying Rosmer, pointing clearly to her fear of possible ghosts; and which, in another, gives a certain noble tinge to the suicide in the end, even though I cannot see why they could not have existed in wedlock just as well, being true to their wills and to their inheritance.

However, Rosmer's constitution was not fitted to radical initiative; he was not one to transform thought into action; he was not fitted to create the true democracy which involved the task of making all the people noblemen. Let us recognise in his desire a certain striving for the "third empire," it was not in his nature to rouse people; and when the play closes, the only one he has altered has been Rebecca, and in her he has only infused his inherited traits. There is a true bearing of courtesy in Rosmer, but Kroll is keen in the knowledge of his strength, for the last heir to the old estate known as Rosmersholm has not the endurance to stand alone, nor has he the moral bravery to bear any blot on the traditional escutcheon.

Magda, of the Sudermann drama, says to the Pastor, "To become greater than one's sins is worth more than all the purity you preach," reminding one forcibly of the famous shawl speech found in "Candida." This is the Ibsen influence on the younger German playwright, who further reflects the Norwegian's individualism in such a speech as that mad



by Magda: "I am myself, and through myself I have become what I am." Rebecca West becomes ennobled in spite of herself; Rosmer remains conservative in spite of himself; each unconsciously influences the other, drifting into love through an irresistible force of attraction. Rebecca has something in her of Hiordis, and something of Hedda Gabler; she has the wild thirst for life, the longing for position; but her efforts to control life are fraught with a definite purpose. She sends Beata to her death with the object of clearing Rosmer's path, yet she did not calculate that the dead could live as this one does; Hedda Gabler gives Lövborg the pistol just because there was fascination for her in feeling that a human being was in her grasp.

The Rosmers are a typical Ibsen family; Beata was cursed to remain childless; Rosmer neither laughed nor smiled; the mill-race was ever present from the sitting-room window. There is the mark of illegitimacy upon Rebecca—a fact marvellously drawn out by stage technique in the confession scene. It is a tainted atmosphere, yet despite it, a large optimism pulses near the surface, which nevertheless has to be thought out before it is grasped—which has to be associated with "Emperor and Galilean" before its spiritual meaning is understood. A French critic has written:[1] "Je n'en connais aucune qui montre avec plus de clarté . . . les rapports éternels de l'âme individuelle avec les conflits généraux, l'étroite dépendance de nos actes privés et des opinions qui s'agitent autour de nous."

[1] Édouard Rod on "La Mort d' Ibsen," *Le Correspondant*, June 10, 1906, vol. 223, pp. 825-855. [Excellent article.]

"Rosmersholm" accentuates the old theory of Christianity killing the joy of life by the restraint it demands upon the passions; it indicates Ibsen's evolutionary plan whereby the best will ultimately predominate provided development is not one-sided. He is an insatiable seeker after truth, a determined unmasker of lies. A hasty estimate of the characters involved might lead one to say that Rebecca was driven to suicide because of shame, because, if one wishes to bring the matter to a pathological issue, as must be done in the instance of Hedda Gabler, it was necessary for her to meet the consequences of her old self. Fear had already chastened her; it never chastened Hedda; she used her feminine instincts to lure, but with them was mingled a physical aversion for the action of natural laws upon herself.

Since the outcome of the argument in "Rosmersholm" is that the claims of tradition cannot be ignored, we must infer that Ibsen was far from being an iconoclast. A change must be effected, but not by absolute severance from the past; one must argue out the dangers to be faced, the tried institutions to be relinquished. Ibsen, however, has always near him some of the old theological demands. They are no half-way measures; just as Brand was ready to sacrifice the life of each human being nearest and dearest, so Rosmer, in order to restore his faith in Rebecca, demands of her life itself as expiation. Beata died as evidence of her blind love for him; Rebecca must die, too, in order to restore his innocence. In her determination, in his following after, we have no inscrutable laws, but the example of a man and a woman sitting in judgment upon themselves

"Why should we care what all those people think!" exclaims Rebecca; "we know in our hearts that we are blameless." But Ibsen is not a believer in the proposition that we are a moral law within ourselves, that we may will freely without having that will opposed by a higher law of previous endowment. The taint upon their relationship is sufficient to destroy the happiness of their relationship. By holding to it, Rosmer's life work can never be brought to a successful issue. And to the end of the play Rebecca is estimated by Kroll in terms of her passion and not in terms of her love.

Ibsen's women have moments when they act by the ice-cold calmness of resolution; sometimes it is courage which makes them face the consequences, at other times it is an aimless groping for a point of rest. When Rebecca exclaims to Rosmer that her reasons for hounding Beata to her death lay in her desire to "take my share in the life of the new era that was dawning, with all its new ideas," she does not ring true. There is weakness and strength in both characters; that is why they are saved from being theoretical puppets. As for Rosmer, he has the high desire of a Brand, with probably more of the nobility of character, but he also has something of the wavering will of Peer Gynt without the activity of imagination. The fantasy of "Rosmersholm" rests in the scene, and in the symbol which is subservient to the idea.

What is the effect of the Rosmer view of life? It ennobles, according to Rebecca, but it kills happiness. If the man has a doubt created by the woman, it rests with her to dispel it. The Rosmer view

of life exacts expiation of sin; it also demands sacrifice. So that in the end their mutual annihilation is, in a way, a victory, a true welding of souls in a spiritual marriage.

The catastrophe is described in a flash by Madam Helseth, the housekeeper. Curiously, the final scene was "cut" by Mrs. Fiske after the first performance, making the conclusion incomplete, since it is necessary to know that the destruction has actually occurred. Mrs. Fiske furthermore gave a modern and rich setting to Rosmer's study, arguing that there was already too much gloom to the content of the play. But though it may be dark, it is vital; more than that, it deals almost exclusively with the spiritual states rather than with the external picturesqueness. The characters are never once relieved of the strain of tense thought.

In London, during 1891, "Rosmersholm" met with as much opposition as "A Doll's House"; critics called it contemptible, and it *is* a very disagreeable handling of sacred relations. Ibsen has now become so used to view life from one side of the crystal that it reduces all his later dramas to a monotone; he even invented a special technique for this view, which exalts the plebeian types (which are the Ibsen types) to the larger realm of his idea. In "Rosmersholm" we are placed nearer the souls of men and women than in any of the plays previous to it; it is more individual than "A Doll's House," and more subtle than "Ghosts"; yet, like "Ghosts," it has similar Greek forces shaping and actuating it. In fact, as some of the earlier dramas possessed an external machinery called "the well-made"

so here we might erect an internal machinery which, by the bareness of the expressed, emphasizes the value of the unexpressed.

Ibsen, therefore, as a feminist, is better seen in Rebecca West than in Nora; but perhaps is best seen in Hedda Gabler. Unfortunately for the stage and for literature generally, the modern conception of the word "subtlety" has become distorted —its meaning too often rests upon impurity; that is its distinctive colour. A school has sprung up in the name of Ibsen which might be termed the apothecary dramatists; to them there seems to be no chemical in a pure state. Their art demands either the semblance of sensuous hair-splitting, or the beautiful crust of femininity waiting to be filled with distorted humanity. Unfortunately Ibsen worked for his optimism through this atmosphere of perpetual problems; he knew nothing of statuesque insipidity —he does not depict any woman whose home means peace; his happy moments are in the dramas he did not write, yet there is little suggestion of despair in his work.

Ibsen's feminine types are not normal; they are too individual to be representative. In actuality, undiluted, unrelieved, they do not exist, except where they serve the purpose of carrying Ibsen ideas. A certain mystery exists in most people's minds about the Ibsen type of woman; they know she is not all quite true, and their conclusions rest on the basis of not understanding quite why she is not all false. What Ibsen, the feminist, has done is to infuse an ...nent of strength into our fictional and dramatical heroines; what we require now, therefore, is

a "third woman" with some of the Ibsen initiative and much more of the sensible woman's tenderness and grace. When we witness the superficial frailties in stage heroines—indiscretions that stir the social surface, but never seem to affect the soul—the tendency for most of us is to shake our heads and smile approval, believing that the sting is quite true of our neighbour, yet absolutely false as regards ourselves. But the Ibsen drama carries the direct appeal: "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

If Ibsen dealt with the sordid and base simply to flaunt them in our faces, the argument against his moral significance would be justifiable. The fault with his feminine portrayals is that they are sometimes too intensive for the mind and the eye to follow in active unfolding; they are neurasthenic, cerebral figures subjected to an atmosphere of spiritual and social fermentation. Ibsen paints—not to express contour, but rather to create the impression of life pulsing beneath. It is as though the soul were slipped from its sheath and all its sexual stamina laid bare. This is felt still more in "Hedda Gabler" than in "Rosmersholm."

Ibsen now found himself the centre of unprecedented popularity; not only were the Scandinavian countries drawing their chief literary sustenance from him, but he was the most prominent figure, even considering Björnson, in Norway. Throughout the German states most of his plays were either being produced or being widely read, and in the case of "Hedda Gabler," an English translation was

made direct from the original proof-sheets, and the play published simultaneously in England, America, and Scandinavia.

On his sixtieth birthday he received telegrams of congratulation, but perhaps the highest evidences of his power came from Sweden, a country which recognised in him a recreator of their sense of life. During September, 1887, he went to Stockholm, and was familiarly seen on the streets in a frock coat, which was further ornamented on state occasions with a gorgeous array of medals. He was fêted, and, as was his usual custom, addressed the company gathered at the "Grand Hotel."[1]

The summer of that year he spent some time at Frederikshavn and at Sæby in Jutland, and it was there that Mr. Archer came upon him as he walked along a country road in the usual frock and a black silk hat.[2] No doubt his desire to be near the water had some bearing on the evolution of his next piece. The sea always possessed a peculiar fascination for him.

His correspondence during 1888 contains nothing unusual; the fact is, Ibsen was now so bound to the routine, if one might say so, of composition, that he sacrificed his letter-writing. It was a business in itself to take care of the pieces already available for production. He read Peter Hansen's translation of "Faust" about this time, and many of his evenings were spent, not at the theatre, but in studying plays. Several uninterrupted hours each day passed in contemplation and in composition. A letter to Brandes,

[1] See Elias, Brandes, Schlenther, ed., vol. 1, p. 527.

[2] See Mr. Archer's account in introduction to "The Lady the Sea," xx; also in The Reader, July, 1906, 8: 185-197.

dated from Munich on October 30, 1888, announced the completion of "The Lady from the Sea."

The first part of the year 1889 was uneventful; it was most likely spent in working out the intricacies of his new drama, and travelling to Berlin to attend special performances of his plays. That summer was passed in Gossensass, the experiences of which, as will be noted, were so mingled with the conception of "The Master Builder."

Not only was Ibsen steadily gaining ground in France through the efforts of Moritz Prozor, and in England through the work of William Archer, but commentaries were likewise adding to a better understanding of his essential purpose. During the summer of 1890 his new play, "Hedda Gabler," so engrossed his attention that he was kept in Munich without any change whatsover. Over in London George Bernard Shaw began a series of lectures on July 18th before the Fabian Society, which were finally published under the title of "The Quintessence of Ibsenism,"[1] during which the Norwegian was called a "socialist"; the London *Daily Chronicle* misrepresented Ibsen in claiming that he resented this political identification and had never studied the question of Socialism. Not only was he interested in the movement, but he had accomplished some reading along those lines. What he really had said was that he belonged to no party whatsoever. If he was at all surprised,[2] it was not that the socialists claimed

[1] See Shaw's "Preface," dated London, June, 1891.

[2] See Correspondence, 215. Also see German ed., Elias, Brandes, Schlenther, vol. 1, p. 510, "Die Socialdemokratie," and note *ibid*, p. 667.

him, but that "I, who had made it my chief life-task to depict human characters and human destinies, should, without conscious or direct intention, have arrived in several matters at the same conclusions as the social-democratic moral philosophers had arrived at by scientific processes."

As late as October 30th Ibsen was still engrossed in "Hedda Gabler," and only by November 20th could he breathe freely.[1] As he wrote to Moritz

[1] The stage history of "Hedda Gabler" is a large one, for if its popularity as an acting drama is not greater than "A Doll's House," it is at least as great. It was published at Copenhagen on December 16, 1890, in an edition of 10,000, and almost immediately appeared in England, translated in 1891 by Edmund Gosse, and also by William Archer. M. Prozor made a French version in 1892. In Italian, it has been done by Prof. Paolo Rindler and Enrico Polese Santarnecchi (1893); and in German by Emma Klingenfeld, M. von Borch and Victor Ottmann. Among the commentaries, see especially: R. Doumic—"De Scribe à Ibsen;" Lemaître—"Impressions de Théâtre," 6e série; *Fortnightly*, lv, 1891, 4-13 (Edmund Gosse); *Fortnightly*, lv, 1891, 736-40 (Oswald Crawfurd); *The New England and Yale Review*, vol. lv, 1891, 14-18 (W. L. Cross); *New Review*, vol. iv, 1891, 519-530 (London—Henry James); *Revue d'Art Dramatique*, 1891, 207, 270 (Prozor); *Revue Bleue*, 1891 (G. Viollat); *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. 109, 1892, 218-224 (C. Bellaigue). Many parodies have been made, the most accessible to English readers being that in Anstey's "Pocket Ibsen." Among the numerous performances, according to Halvorsen, we note those at the Munich Residenz Theatre, January 31, 1891, with Fru Conrad-Ramlo; the Lessing Theatre, Berlin, February 10, 1891, with Fru Anna Haverland. On February 26, 1891, the play was seen with Constance Bruun at the Christiania Theatre, and the evening before, February 25, Fru Hennings appeared in Copenhagen. At Stockholm, the title-rôle was played by Fru Hwasser-Engelbrecht on February 19, 1891. The first English per-

Prozor, "it produces a curious feeling of emptiness to be thus suddenly separated from a work which has occupied one's time and thoughts for several months, to the exclusion of all else. But it is a good thing, too, to have done with it. The constant intercourse with the fictitious personages was beginning to make me quite nervous." Four days after, he wrote that in calling the play "Hedda Gabler" rather than "Hedda Tesman," his intention was "to indicate that Hedda, as a personality, is to be regarded rather as her father's daughter than as her husband's wife."[2]

formance was given in London at the Vaudeville Theatre on April 20, 1891, with Miss Elizabeth Robins and Miss Marion Lea in the cast. Miss Robins then went to the Opera Comique in London, thence to Manchester, and thence to New York, where in March, 1898, she presented "Hedda Gabler" at the Fifth Avenue Theatre (See *Critic*, 1898, vol. 1, 254). Eleonora Duse, who added the rôle to her repertoire, carried it to London and on March 5, 1907, Mrs. Patrick Campbell essayed the part, bringing it in her repertoire to New York during the season of 1907-8. In America, we note Miss Blanche Bates as Hedda in the Fall of 1900. Mrs. Fiske and Miss Nance O'Neil have also acted the rôle, the one a perfect example of the type, the other pitched to the highest tone of melodrama. Madame Alla Nazimova in 1907 presented a careful rendering of the part. "Hedda Gabler," like "Camille," is one of the goals for every ambitious actress. In Paris the first production occurred on December 17, 1891, preceded by a few remarks from Jules Lemaitre. Dr. Brandes' estimate of "Hedda Gabler" is of interest, although it errs in several minor instances; despite his friendship with Ibsen, this critic was inclined to take adversely many of Ibsen's most marked characteristics. The English reviewers, in 1891, scored the piece as usual. Note particularly Clement Scott and Robert Buchanan.

[2] The letters Ibsen wrote to Fraulein Emilie Bardach have

This play is external to a greater degree than any other that Ibsen has written. As he himself declared, his intention was, not to deal with problems, but "to depict human beings, human emotions, and human destinies, upon a groundwork of certain of the social conditions and principles of the present day."

Let us say that a canvas was placed before Ibsen upon which certain actual events had traced definite lines. First, there was a Norwegian composer whose wife, blind with jealousy, had burned the manuscript of his symphony. Second, a beautiful woman had married a drunkard who finally succeeded in mastering his weakness. One day, in an ungovernable desire to show her power over him, the wife put a barrel of brandy into his study, and later found him stretched senseless upon the floor. Third, a young man named Holm served as the model for Eilert Lövborg; he was weak in his mind, and in a debauch had lost the manuscript of his book; he had furthermore made Ibsen his legatee in case of his death, and in some indirect way had suggested his association with a lady much on a par with "Mademoiselle Diana." These are the few details upon which the dramatist was to build.

Of course one can readily understand the avidity with which people search for the symbol in Ibsen. In a way the pistol does represent the lawlessness in

been published by Brandes in the Ibsen volume of *Die Literatur* (Berlin). These have references either to "Hedda Gabler" or to "The Master Builder"; presumably to the latter. See also *Neue Deutsche Rundschau*, December, 1906, where urces for the framework of the plot are given.

Hedda's nature, the vine leaves are significant of weakness in Lövborg: but never has Ibsen been less with a purpose, other than to paint character realistically—proving nothing through the suggestiveness of poetry, but resting content with the accurate strokes of the painter. Indeed, no more apt comparison has been made than that which likened Ibsen's portrait of Hedda to a canvas of Sargent, where the flesh tints, the sinuous lines, the pose, and the expression all conduce toward suggesting the temperament beneath. Ibsen is not extravagant in colour while drawing this figure; everything is concise, unerring, clear-cut, dangerously picturesque. It is not merely that there is exhibited a wonderfully close observation of the feminine nervous framework, but something more; usually an artist looks into the soul of the woman he draws, but few can look out *with* the soul of a woman, can transfer an impersonal sketch to a living, breathing personality. Flinging upon his canvas the common elements of a Norwegian life in the early '60's, Ibsen succeeds in dealing with elemental characteristics acting upon a special type. Hedda Gabler is not the woman every man takes down to dinner, as the critic declared she was; she is not the species, but the variant; she is the composite woman raised to the *n*th power; she is not the normal type but an aggregate of abnormal types.

Egoism eats into Hedda as acid bites into zinc; she is wholly bad, impelled by a consuming desire to overcome her ennui. She is wicked by virtue of her inherent wickedness. Ibsen has never before so thoroughly depicted feminine decadence. Belonging to

the same class as Rebecca West and Ellida Wangel, she is, as Lichtenberger asserts, "the pagan, persuaded of the legitimacy of her natural instincts and of her right to happiness." The same critic asks whether Hedda would have awakened had she been brought in contact with a Rosmer; it is not likely, for the very reason that her greatest weakness was ennui, based on the lack of continued excitation of the passions. Rebecca's egoism was subject to noble influences, but nobility in any form would have bored Hedda Gabler; this is very evident by the fact that she rakes up the escapades of Lövborg, and recalls her peculiar relations with Brack. Whatever she touches, she perverts. Her instincts are those of the leman more than Hiördis's; she commits adultery by the very thoughts that pass through her. She is the play, and the play is but the culmination of events that have occurred. Ibsen is a past master in the art of beginning his plays after the events have taken place, and the consequences are ripening. Hiördis is a heavy rôle to interpret; Hedda Gabler requires almost as much reserve force, and assuredly more subtle shading. The extraordinary characteristic about the later plays is that the whole effect is dependent upon the vitality of the commonplace. The real, terse, unadorned, direct answer is raised to the same dignity as long periods of poetic expression marking "Brand" and "The Pretenders."

Shaw's Superman is naught compared with what Mr. Huneker calls this Superwoman; yet to my mind she is a perversion of the Superwoman in all things save the satisfaction of her instincts. Hedda

is an unscrupulous thirster after life; her temperature slumbers beneath a cold-blooded attitude, until her lust spies an ignoble goal, when she pursues it at feverish heat. She is not a woman, but a vampire; she shuns every quality of womanhood; she desires only to remain unbridled; she abhors any reference to her pregnant state,—a state which might account for her cerebral restlessness, and her neurotic irritability. From the medical standpoint Hedda is an interesting subject; from the criminal standpoint also.

She was a coward in all things that hedged around her independence; she was devoid of heart, to be influenced as Rebecca was influenced; her temptation was to dare, but not to dare bravely; her thirst for beauty was that which is only satisfied with destruction. Her whole attitude toward people was to overcome them; she was a physical beauty, lowly bred, and anxious for social position in order to exercise that physical beauty. Perhaps one might attribute this decadence to her previous education, as some critics are inclined to do; she is vulgar in her tastes, in her strivings, in her associations. She is consumed with curiosity and jealousy; she is productive of only negative qualities; her aristocratic inclination is common; her irresponsibility as to all human ties is coarse. She is wholly bourgeoise.

Hedda Gabler is a mixture of Mrs. Alving and of Rebecca West; all three had pagan license in mind, but only Hedda lacked the heart; she alone of the three was irretrievably diseased. Her portrait is, therefore, one where the whole moral, physical, and spiritual fibre is hopeless from the very first. There

is naught pleasing about the woman in Hedda Gabler, but as Mr. James says, Ibsen's fascination is charmless, "because he holds us without bribing us," quietly working his way, taking the whole load upon his own shoulders.[1]

A reminiscence of the Ibsen formula is found in this play; the man stood between two women in "The Feast at Solhaug" and in "The Vikings at Helgeland"; here the woman stands between two men; but Thea has something of the old romantic mood permeating Dagny, even as Hedda is of the same Viking or Amazon stature as Hiördis. George Tesman has many a similar antecedent, although in his selfishness and in his inexperience he outdoes even Helmer in "A Doll's House." Thea bears the same relation to Hedda that Mrs. Elvsted does to Nora, and Brack is of as much significance to Hedda as Dr. Rank is to Nora. In other words, we might almost accuse Ibsen of monotony in human relationship, were it not that in every case he intensifies the individual development. And he seems to do this through no artistic effort.

Hedda has been married six months when she returns to her new home, furnished partly through the unselfishness of Tesman's aunt, but secretly and

[1] A most poignant review of "Hedda Gabler" is that by Henry James, in *The New Review*, 4 : 519, June, 1891. He says: "Ibsen is massively common and 'middle-class,' but neither his spirit nor his manner is small." Further on, he adds: "His people are of an inexpressive race; . . . even when they are furiously nervous . . . we recognise that they live, with their remarkable creator, in a world in which selection has no great range." James realizes the common but rare quality in Ibsen's workmanship, that "the picture is infinitely *suted*."

partly through the efforts of Brack, a former devotee. She has been bored by keeping close company throughout a long wedding journey with her prosaic husband, and were this all, we should not have much to blame in her. But she is constitutionally stricken, and she goes out of her way to object to small details and to insult in a mean and trivial manner those of Tesman's relatives who come around her. This beautiful creature of expensive ambitions is the wife of a sleepy scholar whose aim reaches no further than a professorship, and whose interest is buried deep in some dry-as-dust thesis. His expert knowledge thus accounts somewhat for Lövborg's desire to read him the manuscript of his new book.

The very bearing of Hedda is a guide to her nature. The stage directions read: "She is a woman of nine-and-twenty. Her face and figure show refinement and distinction. Her complexion is pale and opaque. Her steel-grey eyes express a cold, unruffled repose. Her hair is of an agreeable medium brown, but not particularly abundant." This is the woman who fears motherhood, who chafes under the monotony of married existence, who is extravagant in idea beyond the range of Tesman's purse, who wilfully insults the good, unselfish, sacrificing Aunt Julia.

When Mrs. Elvsted arrives, a fragile little woman whom Hedda had referred to previously as the girl with the irritating hair, the guile used in order to understand the whole scandal between Sheriff Elvsted's wife and Eilert Lövborg reveals an inordinate curiosity as well as a tremendous jealous

streak. To feel that another, through the mere practice of a colourless meekness, could hold a drunkard in check, was galling to Hedda Gabler; to feel that a reputed genius had written a book through the spur of such a woman as Mrs. Elvsted, hurt her animal pride. Through the former's fear and careful guarding of Lövborg, Hedda Gabler recognises her power; she shows a certain amount of restrained agitation, for years before, her path had crossed that of Eilert, and where anyone met Hedda Gabler, there was always a memory left—either a threat to shoot or a threat to burn one's hair.

Hedda's concern for things is always based on the sensational; when her husband hears that maybe he will have a competitor for the professorship, her feeling is not a personal one for Tesman, but she shows a kind of sporting interest in the affair. We see ennui settling upon her; she is not one to regard her marriage bond as anything more than a compact, and a compact, at best, for Tesman to give her certain luxuries and leave her alone. She shudders at the prospect of poverty, and in her restlessness turns to her father's pistols, using human beings as targets for her savage pleasure.

She fires on Brack at the opening of the second act, and misses him; she does not care one way or the other; it is the excitement and uncertainty which please her. And then the two chat together. Ibsen's *tête à-têtes* are never commonplace; his women are never without vital gossip. The whole former intercourse between these two comes out in a casual manner—a morally bad intercourse which

we are made to feel is not yet done with. Brack is intent on being the third member of a "triangular friendship," in which Tesman, the specialist, is no more than a baby in worldly matters. A woman of sudden impulses is not always a safe companion; Hedda is being goaded to desperation by "genteel poverty," and her physical condition is only aggravating her.

Then Lövborg arrives on the scene, a romantic, picturesque type of man, a contradiction as far as mentality goes, but a genius, to judge by the success of his published book, and the originality of the manuscript he brings with him for Tesman's consideration. Ibsen had probably heard of Bellamy's story when he made Eilert write about the future. Hedda's manœuvring to break down his determination not to drink is crafty; she finally gains a victory by insulting his weak will. She could have been the mistress of Brack, she could have married Lövborg, but dislike of being hedged in, or of going too far, had held her back, until social ambition seized her.

With Lövborg Hedda Gabler had been a comrade, yet she had threatened him with a pistol when they bordered upon love. Dread of scandal alone had kept her from shooting. Such a woman can easily undo whatever Thea might have accomplished toward saving a drunkard from ruin. She forces Lövborg to go with Brack and Tesman to a stag party, knowing full well that temptation will overcome him. It is difficult for her to win the victory over Mrs. Elvsted, and as the two women sit waiting for the return of the men, the real poverty of Hed-

da's power strikes her in overwhelming force. She is driven to extremes in her desire "to mould a human destiny."

How is she to do this? During the night's debauch Lövborg's manuscript is lost and falls into her hands. Tesman brings it home, to keep until Eilert is himself again. The insipid scholar does not recognise the devilment in Hedda Gabler as she rescues the parcel from him. Then Brack arrives with the news that this genius has been found in the rooms of a red-haired singer, and in a wild fashion, confusing the loss of his manuscript with that of his pocket-book, has brought down upon him the hand of the law. Hedda had imaged his returning to her with "vine leaves in his hair," instead of which he was in a dingy police station. She is now made to realize that unless she keep Eilert Lövborg from her, she may be brought into a scandal.

The distraught man does rush to her and in confused fashion shows his physical agony. But Hedda is master now; in the drawer she has the manuscript —product of Thea's inspiring effect upon this second-rate genius, the symbolic child of their association; before her she beholds the man dragged by her into a desperate state. Through Thea, he has been changed to the extent of not being able any longer to satisfy the taste for wild living; his is a broken spirit. Hedda sends him off, convinced that he must die; in this respect she commits an act similar to Rebecca West's, but with far different purpose. She even gives to Lövborg one of General Gabler's pistols, in order to do the act beautifully. And as he closes the door, she takes the manuscript.

and burns it sheet by sheet, her jealous spirit satisfied that she has been the instrument of destruction.

But instead of doing it beautifully, Eilert Lövborg kills himself frightfully, and, furthermore, there is fear that the pistol, which has fallen into the hands of the police, will be traced to Madame Hedda; the only thing to prevent it would be Brack's refusal to identify it. Here at last the woman is at bay; she may put Tesman off with the excuse for burning the manuscript, that she was jealous for his sake; it does not take much to blind a dense coxcomb. But Brack now has her where he wants her. Even in devilment she cannot seem to accomplish her aims; she therefore begins to stretch forth for the remaining pistol.

Brack pulls her to the precipice. In a most pathetic manner, when Tesman proposes with Mrs. Elvsted's aid, to restore some of Lövborg's destroyed masterpiece, Thea draws from her dress the loose notes he had made in his researches, as though she had travelled always prepared for just such an emergency. Here is the one point in the drama where a vestige of sympathy may be felt for Hedda Gabler, in the sense that one may sympathize with a sleek criminal hedged in. This animal is a moral coward; her weak spot is abhorrence of scandal; she also revolts against being subject to the will of a suave libertine like Brack. That is why, in wild desperation, she kills herself.

For subtle, psychological reasoning, Ibsen's portrait of "Hedda Gabler" remains unequalled; it is the very essence of realism, a replica of viciousness. One regrets that such beauty of workmanship should

have been expended upon a figure which has to be rejected after it is fully drawn. There is a certain fascination in bad types, and the attraction of "Hedda Gabler" is fascination. She is Ibsen's highest point as a feminist; she is Ibsen's lowest point in the depiction of the feminine.

CHAPTER XIX

IBSEN THE SYMBOLIST

In a way it is disillusionizing to read consecutively the plays of Henrik Ibsen; one invariably detects a paucity of visual range, a commonplaceness of humanity, a low level of environment, a monotony in repeated ideas. The value of order in the study of such a man is found, however, in the curious consecutiveness of his development; by the time one has reached "The Wild Duck," one has become as impatient with results as Ibsen himself became, after writing "A Doll's House," "Ghosts," and "An Enemy of the People."

A systematic unfolding of Ibsen has, nevertheless, its inestimable value; it destroys much of the negativeness of his philosophy, and much of the distrust with which that philosophy may have been regarded. Ibsen must be judged in *intenso* and not in *extenso;* his artistic formula is not variable; his scene is ordinarily contracted. But despite the exactitude of his workmanship, he must be regarded as the artist, and not as the scientific investigator.

The human side of Henrik Ibsen began to react after the writing of "An Enemy of the People": he displayed the impatience that usually follows the narrowing of imagination, and the reduction of emotion to its lowest terms. Ever since "Pillars of Society," he had been sounding the surface of things, and had heard only the hollowness beneath; small thanks he had received for doing this, but now there dawned upon him the natural question that one asks after reading "Brand": Is it right to force an ideal upon a civilization not prepared for it or to create

ideals for others? Is it possible? Suppose we do go through the world tearing veil after veil from the semblance of things, do we not, in a way, become as much an enemy of society as the man who stands by an ideal which he knows is far beyond the spiritual growth of the people around him? That was the mistake of Brand; it is the mistake likewise of Gregers Werle.

We may, therefore, describe the mood of Ibsen, when he started writing "The Wild Duck," as pessimistic; this is more than one may say of anything else he ever wrote; for in this piece he for the first and for the last time verges on a repudiation of all he had striven for. At the outset of his career he had doubted himself with a youthful doubt which could easily be overcome; now he was beyond the middle age of life, and after continued and persistent struggle, he was awakening to all that which he had denied himself. A man of such circumscribed experiences is just the type to break forth in unexpected bursts of passion, such as were to seize him at Gossensass.

In more ways than one was this restiveness on his part apparent. Just as the human in him was to react against the ascetic, so the artist was to struggle with the scientific contemplation of bare formulated results. Ibsen, the poet, grew discontented with the stern distinctness of "Ghosts," and the plain directness of "An Enemy of the People": he therefore turned to symbolism as a means towards an end; that end was, to come forth again as a poet.

Now, symbolism cannot be, or rather ought not to be, an end in itself; it is, after all, but an acces-

sory of poetry; it should not obstruct or obscure; its province is to represent; it should not confuse the idea, but reinforce it. Faguet writes: "A symbol is not at all an abstraction, and it is on that account that there are two words to signify these two things. An abstraction is a pure idea, and a symbol is an image, wherefore it follows that a symbol which is an image is precisely the contrary from an abstraction, which is a pure idea, a barren and unadorned idea." The diversity of opinion regarding a symbol, therefore, lies in the fact that, escaping the real, since it is a representation of a thing rather than the thing itself, in every interpretation one gives it a significance beyond its direct application. That is why it is so easy for the symbol to be obscured and to lose its vital character.

"The Wild Duck" is one of the three plays in which Ibsen shows his weakness in the use of the symbol; it is not that he was dealing with a new medium, for the symbol is found in "Brand," in "Peer Gynt," in "Emperor and Galilean," in "A Doll's House," and in "Ghosts," but that he was relying too completely upon this accessory for the atmosphere of poetry; the symbol, therefore, became too isolated, too much outside of the philosophical intent, too far removed from the significance of character. To such perfection had Ibsen's characterization been brought, that his symbol appears artificial, by contrast; it is present, and in a way it represents some significant idea, and indirectly, it does add to or detract from character, but it is not organically worked in with the whole. Whenever the attention is turned from the contemplation of

holm." By June 25th he had finished his first sketch, which meant that he was ready to mould his character-ideas into individuals.

It was now customary for Ibsen in his correspondence to dispense with any personal reference to his theories, except under some trite term as "follies"; he was, nevertheless, so deeply concerned with the desire of fulfilling his mission to the utmost, that he let his wife and son go to Norway, leaving him to spend a while in Gossensass. "I wish I could have accompanied them . . ." he said to Theodore Caspari; "at my age a man must make use of his time for his work." On September 2d he sent the manuscript of "The Wild Duck" to Hegel, with the customary regret over having to part with old friends, especially those whom he considered as affording the "actor tribe" unusual opportunities for subtle interpretation.

Ibsen regarded this play as a new departure, differing from all else he had ever done; for that reason he was expecting, not only that critics might discuss it extensively, but that the younger dramatists might take it as a herald of newer paths. No doubt Ibsen was thinking of his conscious effort at symbolism; Mr. Archer calls it a culmination rather than a departure, and he is right in two respects. Not only has Ibsen surpassed himself here, in the distinct individualities of his *ensemble* cast, but he has also constructed in such a manner that two dramas, in concentric motion, present a composite result of the active past impressing itself upon the active present. As an instance of Ibsen's readiness to attribute the best motives to conditions, it is of inter-

est to note that upon the first performance of "The Wild Duck," some hissing was detected in the body of the theatre; the author, when he heard of it, refused to believe it was intended as an insult to himself.

When we speak of the weakness of "The Wild Duck," we refer only to the wide chasm between that which stands the human test, and that which is incongruous. We did not object to Gerd's shooting the falcon of compromise; there was naught *mal à propos* in Peer Gynt's struggle with the Boyg; but every time the distinct figures in "The Wild Duck" proceed to hunt in the garret, thus believing that under the guise of a puerile, a senile illusion, they are happy, the ludicrous, rather than the humorous, strikes our fancy. There is more reason for the other illusion. Molvik, the hopeless tippler, would have fallen to pieces, had not Relling forced him to believe that he was diseased, was dæmonic. If Gregers, in his rush after the truth, had disillusionized him, there would have been a horrible catastrophe.

The play possesses a deep tragic undertone, which gathers about the pathetic figure of Hedvig. Her disquieting presence, her tell-tale tendency to blindness, coincident with that of Werle, her very strong devotion and intense sensitiveness, make of her a fragile portrait, perhaps more fragile than anything Ibsen has done. Some refer to her as the morbid child; but she had only arrived at a critical age of change; as Relling said, too young to grasp how thoroughly flabby her father, Hialmar, was; too [illegible]ienced to understand the vulgarity of her [illegible]et sufficiently mature in her love for her

father to sacrifice her life in order to gain a father's love.

Gregers is a caricature portrait of Ibsen, the truth-hunter; Relling is an Ibsen portrait also, taken at a time when he was snapping his fingers at the claims of the ideals, and doubting the right of the truth-hunter to destroy the illusions upon which so much of life is founded. Between these two is placed Hialmar Ekdal, dwelling with his vulgar but practical wife, Gina, a woman who in the past had been the mistress of Werle, but who, now she is settled, proves to be the steadying influence upon her loosely-hung husband.

The Ekdal household consists of four persons, three of whom have suffered at the hands of the merchant, Werle; there is the old father, who has served a prison term which Werle himself should have served instead, for certain land frauds; there is Gina, with whom had passed relations which overcloud the birthright of Hedvig; and there is Hialmar, who has been married to the woman, and set up in business as a salve to another man's evil conscience.

This is, indeed, an ill-founded family, but events have so transpired, that the contentment of ignorance rests upon them; if there is any spleen manifest, it is that which Hialmar shows regarding the shameful and demented condition of old Ekdal hunting in his imaginary woods. Into such a low atmosphere comes Gregers Werle, the son of the merchant. The feelings for his father are none of the best; through maltreatment or rather scandal, his mother had been brought to an early grave, reflecting in-

how the c stitution of Beata; and now the son, discovering how Gina has been settled, and noting the elder Werle's association with his housekeeper, Mrs. Sörby, turns toward the Ekdal family with the kindest, cruellest intention of leading them from darkness to light. [illegible] ent one suspects his motives to be ain[illegible] father instead.

This Gregers [illegible] distinct his portrait, is none too sate[illegible] ttled ideas of what idealism really means; [illegible] uilder of air-castles, but an unsettler of homes; he [illegible] a little of Falk and a little of Brand, with none [illegible] the cynicism of the former, and with none of the [illegible] rength which underlies the stoicism of the latter. He has a mission in life, so he proclaims as he leaves his father, a mission reinforced by his discovery that Hialmar Ekdal's home is built upon a lie. He has not the depth or the penetration to see that his claims upon the ideal are far above the reach of Hialmar, the deceiver himself—a Don Quixote is not an apt comparison, since the knight-errant possessed nobility and sweetness, while young Ekdal was a mediocre dawdler whose salvation was the illiterate spouse by his side; much better the critic's statement that Hialmar is a burlesquer of the ideal.

After an act and a half we are convinced that whatever the past immorality in this household, now at least, with the small deceptions, it can exist to some purpose. Then, at the moment when Hialmar is playing on his flute for Hedvig and Gina, there is a theatrical tap on the door, and enter—Gregers Werle with his mission. He installs himself as a *mother* under the same roof with the disreputable

neighbours, Molvik and Relling. At different times they have all met; the past links them together in true Ibsen fashion.

From this idealist Hialmar gains a smattering of talk about one's mission in life—a vague use of terms which Gina listens to, but always tries to counteract by a firm hold upon the practical. There are certain characters in literature that one likes, not because of their virtues, but in spite of their vices. Illiterate, commonplace, coarse, and cast in the same mould, if not wholly of the same material, as Regina in "Ghosts," this wife of an unimaginative and ultra-demoralized Peer Gynt, has some traits in her not irreclaimable; wild debauchee though he might seem, Relling's view of life, however streaked through with cynicism, is by no means ignoble. Hedvig is loved, but Relling is the only one of the others in the cast whom one might come to like.

There are confounding elements in "The Wild Duck." In the first place Ibsen is laughing at himself as well as others,—he is cynical; in the second place, he is contrasting the right of demands made by different people,—he is satiric; and, finally, he is tragic. But the loss of balance in thus dealing with diverse elements is a weakness of construction, not a lack of surety as to what his characters represent. If there be a change in Ibsen, as seen in this play, it is in his approach toward a philosophic estimation rather than toward a polemic charge. But in thus altering his attitude, Ibsen failed to free himself of his stricture, his narrow canvas. In the majority of instances he also neglected to reconcile the inward

beauty, w[illegible]h there is no doubt he saw, with the outward beau[illegible]y which he persistently distrusted. It was Norman Hapgood who wrote: "The neglect of the dress of beauty is what makes some of Ibsen's plays rather technical experiments, instructive to playwrights, tha[illegible]ous to humanity;" and A. B. Wal[illegible]is by saying: "Just as there are po[illegible]here are dramatists' dramatists."[1]

The defects in "T[illegible]ick" are those which underlie the metho[illegible] his regard to character; whereas on[illegible]y the commonplace, provided it is clea[illegible]t reproduce marvellously the commonplace as it is, if it be tainted. In "The Pretender," "Brand," "Peer Gynt," "Emperor and Galilean," Ibsen's concern was for the broad actions and reactions of the spirit upon outward circumstance; but when he attained the mastery of the social dramas, he shifted his view to a contemplation of the effect of moral relations upon the spirit of individuals. When he turned to symbolism, the poet in him was warped.

The remarkable worth of "The Wild Duck" consists in its portraiture; in his grouping Ibsen has never been more successful than with Hialmar, Gregers and Gina—the woman between two men. It is true that this husband is straying in a poisonous marsh, but since he has found contentment there, who can lay claim to the right of awakening a coxcomb to his coxcombery? On the other hand, Gregers is a false estimator of human nature when he

[1] See "The Stage in America"; also the London *Literature*, August 17, 1901.

mistakes Hialmar for a true man. Ekdal's ideal is simply a daub of remembered and jumbled phrases; Ibsen could not have given a better proof of the results in carrying too far Browning's philosophy that a man's reach should exceed his grasp.

Gregers believes he is setting Hialmar on his feet by showing him the deception underlying his life; in reality, he is taking from him the steadying support of his existence; there are some men not born to live in a wholly rarified air, who err by mistaking an outward acceptance for an inward conviction. This is the kind of man upon whom Gregers Werle is intent on practising his mission.

But the very supporters of the ideal are oftentimes the worst bunglers, and a man with "an acute attack of integrity" is to be avoided. It is wrong to put the torpedo beneath every ark; Ibsen had learned that through bitter experience; he now makes Gregers Werle realize it, but only after it is too late. Truth at all costs is only fit for spiritual giants, and Hialmar is by no means a man of any strength; in fact, as Mr. Archer so poignantly says: "Deprive Peer Gynt of his sense of humour, and clip the wings of his imagination, and you have Hialmar Ekdal." We might resort to another comparison—the different claims of Brand and Gregers to the ideal: the spiritual weight is in the scale of the former, while the latter succeeds in escaping any ill effects from the consequences of his demands.

And so, what happens when this man with a mission whispers to Hialmar the falsity of his life, and when symbolically he suggests to Hedvig the sacrifice of herself to gain the love of a worthless, doubt-

ful fathe The one runs away, only to return to anchorag most ridiculous figure; while the other, pathetica alone, shoots herself. In many ways does Ibse y to show the verity of Brand's cry that "No man c..n see Jehovah and live."

The one result that Gregers has gained by his interference ward designs on the part of th. noney upon Hedvig. Must the nore the moral and ethical clan or clude the other two? Ibsen here res views: he presents a man and his is for nearly fifteen years have been 10 t, on no true union; yet the man, when r. the weak will of the woman, flaunts before her the claims of the ideal, all the time knowing that he himself has had a past almost as reckless. Ibsen, the questioner, therefore frames another query: Should the woman be the one to pay?

Gregers is dense to the consequences which have resulted; he is looking only for what he has pictured ought to be the result of truth—transfiguration, consecration, ennoblement. But he has not found it in Hialmar, who has always to be helped in his hold on the claims of the ideal. Gregers meant all for the best, no doubt; but "God forgive you" is the really true retaliation of Gina.

In one respect Gregers, the idealist, has the wild fancies of a Hedda, who imaged Lövborg shooting himself beautifully. All the while that Hialmar is away from home, the ideal picture of his regeneration is far from the actual picture; he has been off on a debauch, and then, exhausted, has slept through the

night, prosaically snoring during what Gregers was pleased to term the crisis of his life. Relling sees through him and estimates at its full value the spiritual tumult which is supposed to take place within him. Gregers has raised up an idol; his search for the ideal could not advance unless outside of himself there was an idol to adore. And what a specimen Hialmar proves himself to be! "I am cultivating the life-illusion," proclaims Relling, who turns upon Gregers with the plea: "Don't use that foreign word: ideals. We have the excellent native word: lies." For, after all, the average man's happiness is based upon illusion.

Ibsen's theological crease becomes distinct in the end; it is most evident in Gina, who is impressed by the sacrifice of her child; but Relling, who has seen people ennobled by the presence of death, understands full well that Hialmar's sorrow will be turned into hollow rhetoric as soon as he is removed sufficiently from the actual cause of his grief. The curtain is rung down upon a mist of pessimism, for Gregers, with his claims of the ideal, is in a quandary. If Relling is right and he is wrong, then indeed is life not worth living. But, mayhap, Ibsen's *dénouement* was constructed for the express purpose of reinforcing his philosophical theory, first framed in "Emperor and Galilean."

We note how absolutely unessential the symbolism in this play seems to be to the general vitality of its story. It in no way disturbs the significance of the character development. What, after all, is this wild duck? Some would call it "the image of man born for liberty," hemmed in and prevented from

living his full life through external circumstances. Its presence is part expression of the life-illusion; but the force of the moral in this drama is much stronger by reason of the personages in it than because of this bird, which in a way represents Ibsen's feeble attempt at poetry. The sharpness and vividness of the commonplace details are of far more significance than the generalizations centring about the wild duck, and to offer an explanation would hardly add to the fuller understanding of the piece. Archer and Brandes and Shaw discreetly leave the symbol alone; this would have been impossible if its value had been organic.[1]

To a certain extent a closer connection between the symbol and the fact is maintained in "The Lady from the Sea," for the probable reason that it enters and forms an inherent part of the psychology of sex. This only sustains us in our assertion that a symbol should not be flaunted for itself alone.

The curious condition about the new play [2] also

[1] The reader should turn to Ehrhard's "Henrik Ibsen et le théâtre contemporain," for a sane consideration of the symbol in Ibsen. Mrs. Jeannette Lee's "Key to Ibsen," in its effeminate coping with the same subject, is marked by a surprising inventive ingenuity.

[2] "The Lady from the Sea" was published on November 28, 1888, in an edition of 10,000 copies. The Norwegian version was also published in Chicago, Ill., during 1889. In 1890, an English translation by Eleanor Marx-Aveling, was published; it included an introduction by Edmund Gosse. Mrs. F. E. Archer's version appeared in 1891. Other translations include: In French, by Ad. Chenevière and H. Johansen (1892); in Italian, by Prof. Paolo Rindler and Enrico Polese (1894); in German, by Julius Hoffory (1888), by M. von Borch (1889), and by Frita Schulse (1894). Among the many commentaries

lies in the fact that a careful study of its technique will lead to an understanding of its equal strength and weakness; it is Ibsen at his highest in the use of a certain mystic psychology; it is Ibsen in his customary disregard of the logical results of scien-

mentioned by Halvorsen, note *The Nineteenth Century*, vol. 26, 255 (W. Frewen); *Saturday Review*, vol. 69:15 (1890); *Fortnightly Review*, vol. 51 (1889), 120 [Edmund Gosse]. The play has been parodied many times. Among the productions, note: Christiania Theatre (February 12, 1889, with Laura Gundersen); Copenhagen (February 17, 1889, with E. Poulsen and Fru Eckardt); Stockholm (March 22, 1889); Weimar (February 12, 1889, Ibsen present); Berlin (April 1, 1889, Ibsen present); Stuttgart (1896); Vienna (June 3, 1898). In London, it was given at the Terry Theatre, May 11, 1891, and at the Royalty Theatre in 1902 by the Stage Society, the cast including Laurence Irving and Janet Achurch. In 1892, December 17, the play was given in Paris and thereafter was in the repertoire of the Théâtre l'Œuvre. See Lothar, p. 136. Mr. Archer has condensed from *Die neue Rundschau* the evolution of "The Lady from the Sea." I have had occasion repeatedly to call attention to this magazine. The special Ibsen issue contains articles by Otto Brahm, Julius Elias, Herman Bang, and Bernard Shaw. Besides letters and poems, there are included in this magazine for December, 1901, many anecdotes of varying value, but none the less interesting. The man, however, who has been aptly called the Ibsen Boswell, is John Paulsen, author of "Samliv med Ibsen" (1906). A German translation has appeared. Therein consult references to Ibsen and Goethe; Ibsen and Henrikke Holst; Ibsen and Marie Thoresen. The book is inclusive but fragmentary. "The Lady from the Sea" has not been given in New York; it was placed in the repertoire of Miss Grace George while *en tour*. See Huneker's "Iconoclasts" for Agnes Sorma's Ellida, played at the Lessing Theatre, Berlin, September 30, 1904. The reader is likewise referred to Gosse's Biography, p. 236, for a condensation of M. Jules de Gaultier's analysis of "The Lady from the Sea."

tific accuracy; it is Ibsen in his most inartistic and confused blending of three plots, one major and two minor themes; finally, it is Ibsen crystallized, condensed to the most vital terms. The December, 1906, issue of *Die neue Rundschau* contains a rough draft of the first conception of two of Ibsen's plays. A careful comparison of the crude scenarios of "A Doll's House" and of "The Lady from the Sea," with the finished products, will be of interest, but will add nothing new to what we have already formulated as to the maturing of idea and workmanship of the artist in Ibsen. All dramatists shift their motives and their personages; change names here and there; transfer ideas from one character to the other. The mastery of drama is largely a matter of obliteration, of inference. The remnants of one play were usually enlarged by Ibsen in the evolving of another. If he found he could not consistently introduce certain types into his cast, he would tuck them away for future use; he did not hesitate to evolve from the original conception of one character the actual result of two.

The scenario of "The Lady from the Sea," first constructed around 1880, contains an allegorical figure who afterwards became both the Stranger and Arnholm. As the play matured in Ibsen's mind, it grew, intensified; he heightened here, and shaded there; we find this one of the essential requirements of drama; construction means certain mechanical manipulation, and dramatic perfection represented continued labour for Ibsen. His fascination for the sea was one of the motives prompting him, no doubt, in the choice of his subject; but,

as it stands, "The Lady from the Sea," whose value is almost wholly dependent upon a consideration of pure psychology, is shorn, in the case of Ellida, of any extraneous value, however much, in the cases of Wangel's two daughters and their immature views on marriage, it may partake of the disjointed qualities of "Love's Comedy."

Ellida, whose woman-nature is so subtly within control of the sea, is one of Ibsen's most actable rôles; the play, however, is not popular. And the reasons are not hard to find; there is an incongruity in the mixture of the occult, of the psychic, with the commonplace atmosphere of the social scene. This is a breach of artistic taste which clearly represents the limitations of Ibsen; not that it pointed to an irretrievable weakness, for actual accomplishment will bear witness to his sure grip in "Hedda Gabler" and "The Master Builder," which followed it, and "Rosmersholm," which preceded it. It is, perhaps, that the play is not wholly concerned with the portrait of Ellida, as the canvas was filled by the seductive beauty of Hedda.

The interest in the piece is predominantly centred in that wild yearning which once, or perhaps oftener in a lifetime, creeps over us with ungovernable fury—to be free to follow the full bent of our inclination. The sea was ingrained in the woman; the Stranger who came to claim her was an externalizing of that irresistible passion which surged through her bosom, the passion which shone in the eyes of her baby, which coloured her whole existence spiritually, and made her realize that she was not Wangel's wife, so long as she was thus wedded to the sea.

The spiritual weight of Ibsen's argument is, nevertheless, not convincing, as it is in the change that came over Rebecca West. Ellida's nervous condition is productive of wonderful possibilities, had Ibsen's poetry been easily within his control; but her expression of the same represents largely a theory, a continuation of a proposition concerning marriage, which Selma in "The League of Youth" and Nora in "A Doll's House" began. What, after all, constitutes the strong basis of a true marriage? Did Ibsen, when he hammered some glimmering of Nora's miracle into the dull intellect of Torvald, set about, in "The Lady from the Sea," to show what might have resulted with the full understanding of the miracle's meaning? Dr. Wangel opened the doors to Ellida. Go with this spirit of the sea which dominates you, he said in substance—and given this freedom of choice, she chose to stay under the spell of law and order. Would Nora have stayed if Torvald had held the door ajar? Ibsen's error lay in not convincing us that, the miracle of miracles happening to Ellida, she was prepared temperamentally to make her choice a permanent one.

The connection between the inner and outer world is not so subtle or effective under Ibsen's treatment as under Maeterlinck's; the ether of the one is usually familiar to every-day life; the ether of the other has the mystic finesse that escapes being substance. But Ellida comes as near the mystic as any of Ibsen's heroines, and this is because he deals with moods rather than with motives.

Let us say that Ellida in her situation represents

an "undisciplined spirit" coming into conflict with "social order." Ibsen has already proved in the person of Rebecca West the modification that will unconsciously take place in a woman's nature, subject to powerful influences outside of herself. Dr. Wangle having satisfied the inward craving of Ellida for freedom, she wakes to find herself modified by the impress of environment and not wholly inclined to follow the promptings of these wild demands. By her change in action, Ibsen's proposition that freedom of choice must be at the bottom of all relations, becomes a preachment outside of a full and innate conviction of the characters who hold to it.

There are imaginative strokes of some worth in this drama; but its predominant appeal is to the intellect; it is the continued plea for the individual, and by its happy ending it answers Ibsen's question as to what would result should the miracle of miracles come to pass.

On May 3, 1889, Ibsen wrote to Camilla Collett in the following terms: "I felt pretty certain that you, you in particular, would understand it [the play]. . . . Yes, there are suggestive resemblances—indeed, many; and you have seen and felt them, seen and felt that of which I could only have a vague premonition." This reference has been explained by John Paulsen in a most ambiguous way, and until we are offered some definite account of the reported strange influence possessed by Welhaven over Camilla Collett, sister of Wergeland, it were useless to speculate. Both Paulsen and Brahm are inclined to value interest above actual proof. More

profitable it would be to estimate to the full the undeveloped character of Hilda Wangel in order the better to read her motives throughout "The Master Builder."

"The Lady from the Sea" has a cast not closely knit together; they occasionally help the plot along, as when Lyngstrand, the delicate sculptor, describes the sailor and his faithless wife. But whenever the dialogue wanders from the psychological problem of Ellida, it grows unconvincing. There are glimpses in it of "When We Dead Awaken"; there is some of the luring quality of "Little Eyolf." In a way, its sub-plot prepares one for "The Master Builder," and there is now and again the reminiscent strain of "Peer Gynt."

The feeling of suspense is well developed; Ellida's restlessness is contagious; the atmosphere presses upon her. This is aggravated, no doubt, by the fact that her step-daughters fail to aid her in taking root in the household. On the one hand, there are living memories of the dead wife, and on the other, there is Ellida's strange feeling about the sea. Wangel, physician and man of some sense, even though his will is weak, comes to realize that between his wife and himself there has been a lack of full confidence. If Ellida has a "haunting homesickness for the sea," then she must move from the narrow town existence through which the world-life flows only in the summer time—flows through and over without affecting it. But when his wife explains about the Stranger who lured her to him, and in peculiar fashion welded her destiny to his—a spiritual communion—then Wangel understands

that no external palliatives will alter his wife's mood. The disease is internal. For the Stranger saps the will of Ellida; she has not seen him for years, since the day he curiously proclaimed her wedded to the sea. After that, various letters and reports had reached her. But even though his death was rumoured, he continued to have relentless grip of her soul. Then she married Wangel, and in due course the child was born—the child with the tell-tale eyes. Such a sign of inheritance was sufficient to make her doubt herself the true wife of Wangel.

The motive of the sea is poetically treated in isolated places. Ellida has a theory that the water and not the dry land is our natural element—it is simply a matter of becoming accustomed to conditions. Her constant references to the variableness of the sea are in consonance with the reckless variableness of her mood; one might call her a spiritual mermaid —half woman in her love for Wangel, half troll in her fascination for the Stranger. When the latter arrives and declares her to be his, her fear is not the fear of him, but the fear of herself; her conscience is at work; she is torn between law and that which is not law. Ellida must make the choice, but to do so she must be free. In other words, Wangel must free her spiritually and abide the consequences.

Were the Stranger aught but the projection of a psychological state, Wangel might have rid himself easily of such a presence. But Ellida's struggle against any effort to cage the Stranger is only the struggle of the wife to free the woman. The curtain to the third act places proper value on the symbol. "Oh, Wangel," she cries, "save me from myself."

Perhaps the physician is right when he declares his wife subject to morbid illusions, but his saying so does not stem the tide. She shows him how their marriage has been a false bargain, on his part to fill her loneliness, on her part to be a new mother to his children. Force of circumstances, and not free will, welded the [illegible] her symbolic marriage with the sea h[illegible] truer union. Ellida is not the wom[illegible] forms. Law must be brushed aside [illegible]ee will. Her demand for release is tr[illegible]ward the close of the fourth act there [illegible]licative of a spiritual change in this [illegible]la, so it is declared, though one is not thoroughly convinced of its truth, thirsts for Ellida's love. "What if there were work for me to do here?" cries "the lady from the sea."

This woman's life in the Wangel family has been unanchored; there are no ties to bind her spiritually, even though the law proclaims her a wife. She cannot be fettered, except perhaps in body. The law of one's nature cannot be stayed by the law of the land. Then Wangel makes the Ibsen sacrifice; his great love for Ellida prompts him to free her, and by this sacrifice the woman wells up "tremblingly." The realist in the dramatist fell short at this crisis. Even though we detect an echo of Brand's cry that love is greater than will, the mere freedom in choice is not sufficient to indicate the corresponding transformation in character. Only in freedom can a sea-animal become acclimatized to the land; the yearning for the sea was the expression of a need in Ellida for freedom; and her only salvation lay in the common-sense courage of Wangel. This is the

substance of the play. The other motives are but reminiscences or foreshadowings. The atmosphere of the whole is perhaps poetic; as a matter of fact, we might claim the same thing for the background of "Rosmersholm"; but the prosaic quality is still dominant.

In "The Lady from the Sea," we do not identify the longing of Ellida with the spirit of outward revolt. The sea for which the woman yearns is liberty, and, in the words of a French critic, the fjord upon which the little town borders represents the spirit of freedom hemmed about by relentless duty. The individual must not be forced to grow in one direction; he must be given a chance to expand by processes within himself before he conforms with laws outside. And, if we interpret aright, such conformity will not be hard to maintain, provided society, as Ibsen sees it, keeps pace with the growth of individuality, as Ibsen would have it.

In July, 1891, Ibsen finally broke away from Germany; he had been travelling around attending additional performances in Buda-Pesth and Vienna; and at first it was his sole intention of paying another visit home. He did not go direct to Christiania, but travelled along the coast of Nordland, the scenery of which made a great impression upon him. In the autumn, however, he reached Christiania, where he rented an apartment in Viktoria Terrasse; he now determined to settle down, and so sent to Munich for his furniture, little realizing that, save for occasional trips to Copenhagen and to Stockholm, he would never again leave Norway.

He was a wealthy old gentleman now, still active

in mind d body, and wholly intent upon his plays, sacrificin all external activity in favour of his mission in l . That is why, except for minor events which m e some slight impression upon him, Ibsen lived an xclusive life, taking his customary post by the windo ilhouetted against the glass, with nd, and his light wine on the table siting cards were engraved with nrik Ibsen—physician of the world, is the sphinx until he sent forth his world's ills in the form of new plays. solid and handsome in its fittings, and his study at which he worked, was placed directly by a large window overlooking the street. Incident in the life of Henrik Ibsen from now on becomes slight.

Such was his nature, that Ibsen expected homage from the world, but the sense of possessing it in no way brought much more than general satisfaction. In July, 1895, he wrote: "It gives me no sense of happiness. And what is it really worth—the whole thing?" This mood is one which comes to a person after the best energy has gone, and life must thereafter be lived in contemplation and in review. It is well to say "the last of life for which the first was made," provided the first has not been robbed of its riches by a conscious suppression of much that makes life rich. Ibsen was largely the slave of his own lamp. No sooner had he settled in his home, than loneliness rushed in upon him. For twenty-seven years he had been stimulated by the "emancipated and emancipating spiritual conditions of the great world," but his native land gave him a sense

of oppression. He was beginning to show signs of being tired.

Putting aside a consideration of "The Master Builder" for the present, we turn to "Little Eyolf," which followed it in December, 1894.[1] It

[1] "The Master Builder" (1892), was the first play written by Ibsen after his return to Christiania in 1891. On December 11, 1894, "Little Eyolf" was published (Copenhagen) in an edition of 10,000 copies. Another edition was called for on December 21, 1894, and still another on January 20, 1895. In 1895 Heinemann issued a very limited number of copies of the original text in London. The same year, it was translated into English by Mr. Archer and into French by M. Prozor. Following the usual order of things, it has been cast at various times, into Italian, Russian, and German. Among the commentaries: *Die neue deutsche Rundschau*, 1895, 1:75 (Paul Schlenther); London *Academy*, 50:465; London *Saturday Review* (G. B. Shaw), 82:563, 623; *Fortnightly Review* (W. L. Courtney), 63:277. Among the parodies, note especially Guthrie's "Little Mopesman." The play was given in Christiania on January 15, 1895. (See Halvorsen for casts of various performances.) At Bergen, it was presented on January 21, 1895. The Copenhagen production was given on March 13, 1895, with E. Poulsen as Allmers, Fru Oda Nielsen as Rita, and Fru Hennings as Asta. Fru Oda brought the play to New York in the Spring of 1907, and gave a single performance at the Carnegie Lyceum, where she met with failure, having utterly misconceived the part. This discouraged Madame Alla Nazimova, who had almost determined to add the play to her repertoire. On January 12, 1895, the drama found its way to Berlin, where it was given on the stage of the Deutsches Theatre, with Agnes Sorma as Rita. Lugné-Poë appeared in Paris as Allmers on May 8, 1895. In England, the first performance was given at the Theatre Royal, on December 7, 1894. It was a copyright production, and the cast included Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Brækstad, Miss Brækstad, Miss Elizabeth Robins, Mr. William Heinemann, and Mr. Edmund Gosse. (See London *Literature*, August 17, 1901, p.

is a very poetic treatment of pessimism reacting upon human nature; in the light of Ibsen's handling of the pathetic, and likewise in view of how terrible retribution has heretofore been in his hands, the hopeful close to "Little Eyolf" is indicative of one of two things: first, Ibsen's determination to stem the logical tide of cause and effect; or, second, to formulate a law of change which he was realizing in Nora and in Rebecca West and in Ellida Wangel, but which did not fully come to him until the tragedy of Eyolf's death reacted upon the mother's nature.

The play, therefore, is not one of action, but of reaction: it is not one of situation, but of transformation. Dr. Brandes has unerringly struck the note. Ibsen, so he writes, "has . . . with his usual pregnant brevity, given expression to his philosophy of life in a new suggestive phrase, namely, 'the law of change.' All human conditions are subject to this law. The poets of classic antiquity wrote 'Metamorphoses,' poems dealing with those transmutations of which their mythology told them so much. 'Little Eyolf' is Ibsen's poem on 'Metamorphosis.' It is generally said that all living things are subject to the law of development. But the expression 'law of change' goes deeper and is more truthful: for change includes progress and

[1] In English it was first seen in London at the Avenue Theatre on November 23, 1896, with a cast including Miss Janet Achurch as Rita, Miss Robins as Asta, and Mrs. Patrick Campbell as the Rat-Wife. Afterwards, Mrs. Campbell played Rita. A performance was recorded during 1895 in Chicago where the play was acted by an amateur Scandinavian

decline, expansion and contraction in a single comprehensive word. And in this play we see human feelings formed and transformed, we see them die out and come to life again in a different form."

Shall we say, therefore, that Eyolf had to die in order that Allmers and Rita should live?—that his is the corrosive element eating into the egoism of a man and a woman? Mr. Archer's analytical introduction, recently published, discusses these minute points at some length. For our purpose it is only necessary to consider the broad lines of the drama, one whose psychology is much greater than its execution, even though Ibsen surpasses himself here in the compression of his *dramatis personæ*. For the Rat-Wife is little more than a theatrical and allegorical use of Death, to rid the Allmers family of the little gnawing thing in their lives—the pathetic, crippled strange boy; and Eyolf himself is removed from the scene after the first act. Ibsen's early sex formula has been noted before; he usually introduced other characters who bore organically upon that formula. Here, however, he contents himself with the equation of the man, Allmers, between Rita, his wife, and Asta, his supposed half-sister, but in reality an illegitimate relation. The value of Eyolf and the Rat-Wife, therefore, is purely psychological, and that of Borgheim, the road maker, however agreeable he is in sentiment, is wholly unessential to the pending crisis.

Ibsen's symbol is active; through death it leads to a higher life. Let egoism increase by what it feeds on—in this case Eyolf—and there is no end to pessimism; remove the source of nurture, create a void, and something better may take its place. Ibsen, the

of Ibsen's plays is sufficient indication that coincident with his invention was the slow evolving of the spiritual values which lay in the events themselves. At first, the Rat-Wife must have been conceived purely as part of the dramatic machinery, the agent to remove Eyolf from the scene, before becoming the epitome of an evil conscience beginning to understand its sin.

The first act may be called Egoism; the second act, Recrimination; the third act, the Law of Change. All are vitally interesting, but theory slips from the human, and works conclusions to suit itself. We have the same right to ask whether Rita, in view of her innate human nature, could be so altered by the law of change, as we had in doubting Ellida's wonderful momentary transformation.

It is futile to give fixity to Ibsen's meaning; that is where the remarkable phase of his genius is so evident; human nature is not arithmetical, and therefore can be seen only at angles and not as a whole. If analysis concern itself only with motive and the larger theme, it should not neglect the minute agents of which Ibsen was master; his characters are not fixed; they are not surface portraits; atmosphere sweeps behind them as well as over them. The law of change in "Little Eyolf" does not affect situation, but character.

Allmers has been writing a book on "Human Responsibility," while at his very hand he has been neglecting his crippled son. He has suddenly waked to this, and has determined to "help him bring his desires into harmony with what lies attainable before him," when he discovers that his wife's jealousy

has shifted from the book to the child. Her passion is so strong that it is evil. She cares not for the calm, deep tenderness of the husband; she will share him with no one. Her every action shows how her savage egoism is wounded. In such a frenzy there falls upon her the catastrophe of Eyolf's death, the cripple lured to [illegible]tat-Wife, and utterly lost, except for [illegible]hich comes floating back over the wa[illegible]

Allmers an[illegible]eized by unutterable pangs of cons[illegible]s morbidly quiet, the other nervously res[illegible] of them is the guilty one? Eyolf stan[illegible]em more than ever, now that he is dead. [illegible]gh the agony of remorse, the souls of two persons are reconstructed. Rita had borne a son, and despite the pain of travail, her mother-instinct had been stifled by jealousy. Allmers had given up his book in order to round out the life of the boy, not for love of him, but because he thus could better give expression to himself as a father than as an author. Through the want of love they lost their child; in fact, they never possessed him. They are being scourged; they are turning upon themselves as well as upon each other. At this point the only solution tends towards the tragedy of separation. They feel a common guilt, but as yet they are not aware of the necessity for a common atonement.

It finally ends when the law of change keeps this man and woman together,—exactly how is not made sufficiently clear for dramatic effect. Let us say that change may mean re-birth, resurrection, transition to a higher life. There is assuredly something

of the God in man, even though it will be a long while before Rita realizes it. "Good God," she cries, "we are creatures of earth after all." But Allmers adds, "Something akin to the sea and the heavens, too, Rita." At first they questioned the divine reason, bringing about the death of Eyolf; but in their regeneration, they begin to realize in it some purpose. For whereas heretofore their egotistical lives had been spent in vain, they now understand that to live a life they must fill a life with something to live for. Only after Eyolf's death could they view themselves in proper perspective.

If Allmers had left Rita after this realization, it would have been the confession that with her there was nothing for him to live for. They finally touch spiritually in a mutual determination to replace the void in their existence by active service among the poor children in the name of little Eyolf. Thus the play contains great moral and ethical questions, which are nevertheless answered in a very obscure manner. The elements in its composition are more vital than the elements in "The Lady from the Sea," but they are not so clear in the minds of the reader, nor, we might add, in the mind of Ibsen himself. If one should insist on the emphasis of Symbolism in Ibsen, we should say that it measures the decline of his mental strength. For his poetry at its highest was not dependent upon the symbol, and his prose at its barest was too direct for ornament. Ibsen, the Symbolist, is only of secondary importance; I cannot see in him the arch-symbolist.

CHAPTER XX

HENRIK IBSEN'S EPILOGUE

THE breaking up of Henrik Ibsen was as logical in its several stages as his early development. It is as though old age had come upon him, surrounded by remnants of ideas too vital to be ignored, and he had introduced them, despite their fragmentary character, and without that almost incontrovertible strength which as a dramatist he had heretofore shown.

The Ibsen cults acknowledge no such waning of the master's power; they believe "When We Dead Awaken" a continuance of the crescendo scale, when, in reality, while it contains intermittent sparks, it represents in its weakness the crumbling of a tired mind. Between it and "The Master Builder," there arches a span that is unsound; the rivets are no longer firm; here and there, unerring connections are missing; the foundations have worn away and are repaired with old material. Even "The Master Builder" shows signs of screws being loose.

The Ibsenite is representative of a certain type of mind; he is misrepresentative of Ibsen. In a way he has approached Ibsen with as cramped a superficial vision as Ibsen has shown in his approach toward the outward facts of life. The Ibsenite has negatived Ibsen by an hysterical acceptance of the Ibsen crust. And it is this very crust—the sordid, diseased, neurotic, drab admixture of life—which is Ibsen's least contribution to literature. He forced himself into the dark visual habit—he persistently saw things in drab, but the vital connection was a flare of fire or a deep glow. "The Master Builder" was the last big flame before the flicker and the night.

The Ibsen disciple believes that the greatness of the Master is measured by the variety of meanings attached to his thesis, on the one hand; and to his symbol on the other. But it was just that very looseness of interpretation which was one of his greatest weaknesses. Yet he did not consciously cater to over-interpretation by the over-use of the symbol.

"The Master Builder," none the less, is overweighted with varied meanings; every situation is representative and suggestive. Perhaps this is so, perhaps that is so. The symbol sets the mind in a quandary. It is all deftly done, and the master-poet, the master-craftsman piles meaning upon meaning, a mighty bulwark of poetic elements which obstructs vision. This is not Ibsen's usual direct method, although it is Ibsen's familiar atmosphere of the vital commonplace.

In matter of character, Ibsen has made slight change from the Ibsen type. However broad the spirit in which he wrote, however world-significant the problem, the Ibsen man or woman is not without the suggestion of the tongue stuck in the cheek, or the roving eye, or the restless body. Death does not appear in his pages under the guise of impending fate; it is not enough that the sense of imminence be present, but the realistic corroding of the physical must be made visible. Aline Solness is wrapped in the mantle of the grave; Ella Rentheim is as uncomfortably certain of her day of doom as Dr. Rank; Irene's shroud has all the odour of decay. Mentally, Ibsen never failed to stimulate, but visually he fell into a rut.

"The Master Builder" is bigger in philosophical

scope than it is in execution. No interpretation could or should try to fix its meaning. But it is evident that Ibsen could never have written it until he had reached a certain age. It is preëminently an old man's play; however much it may express the exuberance of youthful vigour and daring, it suggests also the view of the [illegible]neration through the eyes of the older ge[illegible]

Here, then, is [illegible] himself old; we have already quoted [illegible] in which he says that he is writing aga[illegible] when the end may come. Thereafter, wh[illegible] succeed him? Ibsen, the Individualist, did [illegible]e the Individual—he pointed to a class. T[illegible] theme—the younger generation who are approaching his door, even as he approached the portals of the generation behind him.

The move to Norway made Ibsen feel old; he wrapped him within himself, and his dramatic action was built up from contemplation. For a brief instant, in that memorable summer at Gossensass in 1889, the passion for Emilie Bardach gripped him hard, almost fifty years too late; it was a case of youth and old age—warm, full-blooded youth, with an old age now jealous of a youth it had never experienced. He called her his princess, he walked and talked with her constantly, he was shy *in* his love, and reticent *of* his love when he afterwards viewed it in memory. The incident to me is the symbol of a tragedy of nature; it does not reflect on Mrs. Ibsen; it reflects on a certain part of the man's nature, which was ruthlessly stunted. "Oh, you can always love," Ibsen was once heard to say, "but I am happier than the happiest, for I am beloved." This is the resig-

nation of the old man—the over-maturity of undevelopment.

Let us take the deep sentiment of Browning's "Evelyn Hope"—"There, that is our secret!" It might be used as a motto for the romance at Gossensass. Ibsen's feeling was so strong that, maybe, it was well for him to have written "Hedda Gabler" immediately after. That drama is cold in its keen analysis. Had "The Master Builder" been composed at this period, it would not have contained so much of the element of the transcendental as it does. Ibsen's correspondence with the girl represents a gradual breaking away from that which was very hard to break away from.[1]

Two more pieces of external evidence are to be noted in the evolution of "The Master Builder." A poetic outline of its plot was composed by Ibsen on March 16, 1892, under the title "De Sad Der, de To" (They Sat There, the Two); and if this be coupled with an early poem of his, "Building Plans" (1858), much of the motivation of the drama may be located.[2] Dr. Elias, with his cus-

[1] The correspondence between the young lady and Ibsen was made public through *Die Literatur* (Berlin), September, 1906, by Dr. Brandes. Archer quotes from it in his introduction to "Hedda Gabler" and also in "The Master Builder." The reader is referred to these introductions for interesting data.

[2] In the original, this piece was called "Bygmester Solness." It was composed in Christiania in 1892, and was issued during the second week in December, 1892. See Halvorsen. The English translation was made in 1893 by Edmund Gosse and William Archer; by M. Prozor in French (1893); and in German by Sigurd Ibsen (1893), Paul Herrmann (1893), and Victor Ottmann (1893). Among the commentaries, note: The London *Academy*, 1893, p. 319; *Saturday Review*, 75:

tomary care in recording external evidence, has, in addition, noted Ibsen's mention of a girl whose passion in life was, not to be married, but to lure women's husbands from them. "She did not get hold of me, but I got hold of her—for my play," the dramatist declared, in naïve fashion.

But, while this external history has interest, it need not detain us long. Ibsen, in his gathering and building, fused everything to his artistic purpose. If we deplore Emilie Bardach's sensitiveness in allowing the Ibsen letters to be published so soon after his death, it is offset by Ibsen's final use of the incident—"the May-sun of a September life"—which brought him, as he wrote in her album, "high, painful happiness—to struggle for the unattainable."

241 (1893); 76:34; *Fortnightly Review*, 59:468 (1893.—A. B. Walkley); Maurice Maeterlinck in *Figaro*, 1894, No. 92 (afterwards included in his essays). There are many parodies, especially the one in "Mr. Punch's Pocket Ibsen." Among the performances, note: Christiania Theatre, March 8, 1893; Copenhagen, March 8, 1893; Lessing Theatre, Berlin, January 19, 1893. In London it was given a matinée performance at the Haymarket Theatre, December 7, 1892. The cast contained, on February 20, 1893—Miss Robins as Hilda, and Mr. Herbert Waring as Solness (Trafalgar Square Theatre). In June, 1893, the play was given at the Opera Comique, thereafter going to Manchester. The Paris production was given at the Théâtre l'Œuvre, April 3, 1894, with Lugné-Poë. The same company went to London in 1895. Isolated attempts at productions in America were made in Chicago during February, 1893. In January, 1900, at the New York Carnegie Lyceum, the piece was presented by the Independent Theatre, with Miss Florence Kahn as Hilda. Then, in 1905, Madame Nazimova played it in Russian on the East side in New York, thereafter appearing in English, during 1907-8, with Mr. Walter Hampden as Solness.

The interpretation of the rôle of Hilda Wangel would be greatly aided by a consideration of her nature as developed in "The Lady from the Sea." While it is not absolutely essential to make such a connection—for a character must stand upon its independent merits—still, the analysis will throw additional light upon Ibsen's workmanship; it is not always that he carries his personages from one drama to another, but when he does, as in the case of Aslaksen and Stensgård, he retains their dominant traits. We may consider Hilda Wangel as the symbol of the younger generation knocking at the door, behind which Solness quivers, for fear of being deposed; but she is also a woman whose nature, however poetic and picturesque, is tinged with just a small quantity of Hedda Gabler's love of the impossible.

Throughout "The Lady from the Sea," Hilda Wangel is depicted with a certain dash of boldness, that lends spirit to her character; the mere joy of being alive tempts her to fly in the face of Providence. Ibsen assures us that she sought the love of Ellida, but Hilda, by her defiant mood, does not reinforce the idea. In fact, even though her youth may be her excuse, there is an inconsequent ring to her that does not attract, however much it may fascinate by its unconventionality. You will notice that whenever the Master Builder's ideals warm her fancy, Hilda exclaims "Thrilling"—the very response she uses in "The Lady from the Sea" whenever she tries to push Lyngstrand, who is supposedly delicate, to the utmost limit of his strength. Were it any but Ibsen who was dealing with such a character, we might be justified

in callin Hilda Wangel a flirt; but she is much more than tha -she is the epitome of recklessness, who might have found in Brand the hero of her Kingdom. The actress, therefore, who studies "The Master Builder," must likewise analyze the Hilda of the earlier play.

In the l coloured throughout with gloom, l Master Builder; he has attained his po 'ession at terrible cost, having ruthles everyone in his path, among them) now occupies a subordinate place Events in the life of Halvard Solness pon his conscience; on the one hand, he is e memory of an awful tragedy which had brought death to his children; on the other hand, each day he has Brovik's son before him as a sign of impending danger to his reputation. Ragnar Brovik's genius threatens the Master Builder. But ever ready to resort to any means for self-protection, Solness holds Ragnar down, not only by refusing to credit his drawings, but by encouraging Kaia Fosli, whose love for the Master Builder is greater than her love for old Brovik's son. Whatever philosophic beauty the struggle for the ideal may have, Solness resorts to ignoble means.

The older generation that stands at an eminence, knows not when to retire; the younger men are regarded as a danger simply because they are young. Look deep within your heart and you will come to know that old age fears the strength of youth. That is why Solness stoops to the lowest, neither discouraging the girl in her love, however much he may refrain from compromising her, nor attempting to lift

the jealous suspicion of his wife. Solness later confesses to Dr. Herdal that he has a way with ladies.

The Master Builder talks a great deal, but the poetry of his views is not in consonance with the sordidness of his fundamental character; the survival-of-the-fittest theory does not imply humane considerations. Yet as soon as Hilda comes knocking at the door in theatrical fashion, his maturity gives way, as Ibsen's gave way at Gossensass, before a flood of youthful sympathy. Fearing the younger generation, he unconsciously succumbs to it at its first entrance.

The Solness family is such a one as Ibsen likes to depict—an ill-founded one. Aline, the wife, a slave to superficial duties, an anæmic figure, does not rise above misfortune; she does not try to meet depression by any healthy counter-irritant; she is not a spur to action, and that is what the Master Builder needs. When the impetus comes from Hilda, it comes too late; he confides in youth as he had never confided in Aline. Solness wanders in his talk, exhibiting a distraught conscience, experiencing self-torture of a tragic intensity.

Hilda had met the Master Builder before, had seen him climb the high steeple of the very last church he built; she had called to him then, in a wild moment of recklessness, as he stood at the top of the dizzy pinnacle. That was ten years before, when she was a mere child. But during the time which intervened between then and now, she had built upon Solness's promise, for he had kissed her, had called her his princess, and had declared he would come for her in ten years and give her a kingdom. But the promise had

passed om his mind—an act which Hilda cannot reconcile with his bravery in climbing the heights he conceived.

Hilda is feminine to the core; she senses the whole atmosphere in the Solness home; she cross-questions with the insistence of a criminal lawyer. But, despite her traits, s... the abstract idea; her speech has l... It was the mystic in Hilda Wang... onded to Solness on the heights; it w... r enthusiasm over his climbing the ...was, moreover, in tune with somethi... s he was. The element of thought-t... hought-suggestion, enters "The Mas...

But Hilda's hero builds no more churches; he only builds homes for human beings. She comes to him just at the lowest ebb of his energy; his loneliness has weighted him down, his fight against deposition has made him timid. Fear is about to crush his spirit, when Hilda enters—she is what he most needs.

The Master Builder brooks no obstructions; otherwise he has certain inclinations which may be regarded as considerate. One might say that he possesses the instinct of kindness, but that his observation is lacking. He cannot see what his wife most needs; she cannot see what is wanting in herself. The result is another proof of Ibsen's claim that such a married life is productive of no home. Solness's is a peculiar type of egoism; Aline is drawn with Ibsen's usual method of treating anæmia. One has a sick conscience, the other is troubled with nerves. To the man, Hilda brings incentive, but Aline is in a ripe state for an attack of distrust.

The younger generation, as typified in Hilda Wangel, is breezy, unconventional, thoughtless, mature only in the wisdom of the impossible. Things that hurt the ordinary, amuse her; even in her dreams she courts sensations, and in a way predestines her thrill over the Master's end, by dreaming of such a disaster the first night she spends in his house. Hilda is warm and human, even if she does exercise some of the lure of the wild.

Such a woman can easily control a man by sheer force of witchery. Perhaps Ibsen's art here develops as it has not done before—in making one realize an undercurrent of philosophy which almost assumes a fatalistic influence, forcing the characters to act, without being a vital part of the action. Hilda has genuine inconsistency; in one breath, she feeds Solness's fear of the younger generation; in another, she prompts him to aid Ragnar Brovik; and one can see that her whole object is to keep the real Master Builder in consonance with her ideal of him, to spur him into competition with the younger generation.

Hilda is an outlet for Solness's pent-up feelings; he speaks to her of subjects which Aline, in her weakness, cannot bear to listen to: the burning of his wife's home, the loss of his twin children—all these disasters are the foundations for his success—the price of his fame. But these tragedies which befell him were bound up in the psychic principle that "thinking makes them so." He might have had a home, but in order to succeed, he had to sacrifice himself; he had to walk over Aline and her mission in life to be a Master Builder of children's souls. Solness bends beneath the price he has had to pay for success.

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indirectly show the state of his own inner being at the age of sixty-four. He is dealing with a conflict of the material with the spiritual and the outcome shows him how inadequately the outward expression measures the inward reach. When the Master Builder climbs his own tower, piled high above the earth, he falls, not only because of the lack of physical poise, but because he has overreached himself—he cannot stand, since it is not the Master Builder who has gained the heights, but the Master Builder plus Hilda. It strikes me that Ibsen was not content with looking into the future "as far as human eye can see," but further.

Hilda is undoubtedly a positive force. Huneker is correct in claiming that had she come to Rosmer, he would have hastened into the world of men in order to ennoble them, rather than inflict upon himself the retribution of death.

We might read into "The Master Builder" all the consistency which Ibsen would have wrought, had his power been equal to the task. Somewhere in the mass there is a social significance which prompts us to ask whether conditions of time and place did not bring destruction upon Solness. The great man after all is the result of sacrifice. It is as though Ibsen himself were crying out, "Yea, my triumph of brain has been immense, but within, my heart's fire has flickered and gone out."

There is some element of the insane about "The Master Builder"; faith and unfaith struggle, uncertain what they are fighting for. Here are all the ingredients of rich imagination gone wrong; there is an atmosphere of sorcery about the motives of the

characters ne suspects incantations and a hypnotized being lrawn to heights where, suddenly, consciousness r urns and hurls him back to the ordinary plane. It is the force of the fall that kills. Thus, in its turn, t younger generation must destroy to make room ror itself. We have the struggle of two sides of life. uilder will not build churches, nor left for him naught but castles in t

On the whole. tion in "The Master Builder" is f rtain luminosity of spiritual value ıy. Not only is Solness brought by n ignoble sphere of life; but she, by , which is due to the presence of Aline, displays also a conscience. Her boldness and fearlessness are tempered by a dash of compassion. But the spiritual change in the two is not indicated with that great touch to be found in "Rosmersholm."

The colours in "John Gabriel Borkman"[1] are

[1] "Little Eyolf" intervened between "The Master Builder" and "John Gabriel Borkman." The latter was written in Christiania, and was published in December 1896, in an edition of 12,000 copies. The English translation by Mr. Archer was forthcoming in 1897; the French version by Comte Prozor in 1897; the German version by Sigurd Ibsen in 1897. The reader is referred to Halvorsen for numerous commentaries, among them *The Academy* (London), 1897, 1:131; *The Speaker*, January, 1897; *The Academy*, 1897, 1:67 (G. B. Shaw); *Athenæum*, 1897, 1:519; *Le Figaro*, 27/12, 1897 (André Maurel); *Revue Bleue*, 1897, 1:90 (Jacques du Tillet); *Revue des deux mondes*, 139:693 (Jules Lemaître). The play has been parodied. Halvorsen indicates the following performances, among others: Christiania Theatre, January 25, 1897, with Garmann as Borkman, Fru Gundersen as Fru Borkman,

blocked in with much more depth of wisdom than in "The Master Builder," though the effect of the former is lacking in the spontaneity of the latter. Hilda Wangel was typical of Ibsen's rejuvenation, but while there is still some youthful intensity apparent in the new play, while the action proceeds from act to act without interval—the curtain merely dropping to denote the passage of time—the motives are sombre. The canvas of "John Gabriel Borkman" is Ibsen's old masterpiece.

Three types of middle age are drawn in their relation to the younger generation. There are two sisters, between whom stands the husband of one. This is Ibsen's old Saga formula again. Borkman is built up from a newspaper characterization which came to Ibsen's notice in 1895. He is the arch-criminal of the age, the type deprived of any con-

and Frk. Reimers as Ella; Stockholm, same date; Copenhagen, January 31, 1897, with E. Poulsen as Borkman, Fru Eckardt as Fru Borkman, and Fru Hennings as Ella. In Germany the play met with censor difficulties at Frankfort-on-Main, but during the year it was seen in most of the big cities in the Empire. Note the London matinée (copyright performance) at the Avenue Theatre, December 14, 1896. On May 3, 1897, the Century Theatre Company, appearing at the London Strand, presented the play, with a cast including Mr. W. H. Vernon, Miss Genevieve Ward, Miss Elizabeth Robins, Mrs. Beerbohm Tree, and Mr. Martin Harvey. In America, the drama was given a New York production on November 18, 1897, by the Criterion Independent Theatre, under the auspices of Mr. John Blair, who played Erhart. While the drama has been given in Paris, in Brussels, and throughout Italy, it has never proved a success. If the reader will consult Ibsen's scenario for "The Lady from the Sea," it will be found that he had there in mind the conception of Foldal, the dramatist.

ception of commercial honesty, yet whose dreams are Utopian. He thirsts after power, not over anyone, but over everything and everyone. With other people's money, he schemes to corner the world; the deep sea and the hillside sing to him of treasures which will bring him power; he is a man morally diseased, a mega[illegible]he illusion that he is a genius. Affe[illegible]to him by the side of the power whic[illegible]ithin his grasp. He sacrifices the love [illegible]a Rentheim, believing that thereby, bank[illegible] one man to help him in his greed, will [illegible]by this sacrifice and will be free to fo[illegible] suit. So Borkman marries the other sister, [illegible]lla, unsettling their plans, remains single to the end. Thereupon Hinkel betrays his friend and Borkman is sent to prison.

The play opens at this point. The ex-banker has cut himself off from his wife, not having seen her for years, living in a gallery on the first floor of the same house, where all during the opening act, one may hear his restless pacing up and down. Occasionally he has a glimpse of his son Erhart, but his one companion is Foldal, who has suffered the greatest loss at his hands. The character is a cameo study of great value.

Into such a situation comes Ella Rentheim, the woman who has been starved spiritually by this man, yet whose love for him is still strong. Borkman has killed her soul, but before the financial crash, he saved her money. It is upon her bounty that he now lives; the Borkman family are in her house.

Ella is the Lucretia of Phillips' "Francesca da Rimini"; her maternal instincts have been ruthlessly

killed by a man who has sold her for the sake of power. With wonderful ease, therefore, Ibsen presents the relation of the two sisters toward Borkman's son; the mother looks toward him for the restoration of family honour, Ella loves him purely on account of the fact that he is Borkman's son. Her passion is not of the jealous calibre, like Rita Allmers'; her egoism, while it is strong, is distinctly tinged with Ibsen's old-time romanticism. There ensues between these two a vital struggle for the possession of youth.

From the very first, we note in Ella Rentheim the key to the solution; Erhart is young; the mission his mother would impose upon him is despotic; her power in its way is criminal, since it tries to shackle the freedom of the individual. Therefore, his aunt's presence is inimical to the mother's exercise of power. Once before, the fight between love and power had resulted in disaster; now there is to be a battle of another sort.

Upon Erhart is forced the only alternative—choice. But a surprise is in store for these two women. Young Borkman has come to know the Hinkels, a family around whom Ibsen casts the atmosphere of coarseness. At this house, and elsewhere, he is thrown with a Mrs. Wilton, divorced, strikingly handsome, and appealing. She now enters, following Erhart, who is an unsophisticated boy, with a weak will. Mrs. Wilton's power over him is almost supernatural. When she leaves him behind in the grip of these two women of his family, he chafes, becomes restless. Above him, he hears music being played to his father by Foldal's daughter—

The Dance of Death; before him unfolds a middle-aged tragedy; yet he is young, and born for light! He does not begrudge his father the funeral dirge, provided he himself does not have to listen to it. As Erhart goes off, fully intent on joining Mrs. Wilton, drawn there by her will, mother and aunt face each other. They each a way that he has escaped the other's

All this while, th of Borkman is heard. The new scene begi nce of Death is being finished. Ibsen's br with rich paint. In early days he had wri ses about the miner; now he projects the figu onderful distinctness. Against a dark, warm backgr und is cast the white head, the powerful frame of John Gabriel Borkman. Prison has not dulled his egoism; the quiet of the cell has not hushed the ringing of metals in his ears. At times he is a *poseur*, a deceiver of himself; his morbidness is as much the product of his egoism as it is of the natural consequences following his criminal actions.

Nothing that befalls him can alter his belief that he is an exceptional person. Vainglory sustains him; he firmly believes that he will be reëstablished in his bank, if for no other reason than that he wills it. If only he had succeeded with his Utopian dream! But fate has a way of bringing disaster just five minutes before success. Borkman's moral nature is paralyzed. He cannot help his criminal instinct.

The whole second act is one of exposition. Softness, tenderness, richness are all there—Foldal sketched delicately, Borkman massively, and Ella Rentheim, when she enters, romantically. Ibsen has

never before dealt so powerfully with character as is revealed in the scene between the "dead man," Borkman, and his crucified love, Ella. He, the sinner, has taken gladness out of her, has cheated her of a mother's life. Erhart, therefore, through the sin of his father, is somehow partly her possession. She should have been the mother of his father's son. Racked by a morbid knowledge of her approaching death, Ella Rentheim would leave Erhart her money, provided he will assume her name, and perpetuate it. Then, entering in a most effectively theatrical manner, Mrs. Borkman interposes; she declares in her egoism, in almost tyrannical thirst for possession, that she will save her son, and rushes from the room. In this way, Ella persuades Borkman to come with her and reach some understanding, else Erhart will be wrecked in the storm.

The drama has reached its height. Borkman's individualism can never be understood by his wife; on the other hand, the latter had perfect right to claim happiness which he might have given her, but which he sacrificed as unfeelingly as he did the heart of Ella Rentheim. The greatest sin for which Erhart will have to atone, is not the mother's false sense of honour, but Borkman's conscious sense of broken faith with Ella.

Erhart now has a triple choice to make—between father and mother and aunt. Sentimental morbidness, idolization, watchfulness of the older generation, are sufficient to make the younger generation rebel; the individual struggles when another will is imposed upon him. Since his women folk cannot hold him, maybe a father can. Borkman's determi-

nation to work out his redemption appeals to the boy, perhaps because of the very fact that it is inimical to his mother's idea of reëstablished honour, of traditional atonement. But why should he struggle, when happiness is at hand in the form of Mrs. Wilton? Only she among them all realizes that the forces prompting youth are different from those of middle age. There is something about this woman that lends warmth and sincerity to the scene, although Ibsen taints the picture by making her utter some cynical remarks regarding the lasting qualities of love.

In the final act, which is largely mechanical, the underlying principles and theories of this drama are drawn to a close. The younger generation rides heedlessly over the older generation; Borkman, crazed with an insane belief in his wild, almost savage egotism, meets his death by a sudden extinguishing of the fires of his nature, while Ella and her sister are reconciled—two shadows over a dead man, as they had been for many years.

The play is misty in its philosophical purpose, and artificial in its situations toward the end. The logical qualities lie in the conception of character, in the close treatment of the time element, in the solidity and vigour of its figures without any effort at delineation. The play would have been stronger, but for the inclusion of a weak fourth act.

There is egoism in ambition, there is egoism in love, there is egoism in youth. Behold, such is your problem. Ibsen's solution is no solution at all; he seems to have striven only for the best means of bringing conditions to a close. He neither defines genius, nor weighs moral accountability. He has

simply made a picture, thick in human colour. He has not fallen into argumentation, nor has he challenged public comment. In the maturity of his wisdom, Ibsen here approached some of the qualities of Maeterlinck's *static* dream.

Björnson once remarked of "John Gabriel Borkman,"—"Oh, that's a piece I can't stand; entirely pessimistic and useless." But though it does not consciously set about proving anything, though it is not polemical like "Pillars of Society," with which it is constantly compared, it is more mature in its human significance. In the former play, Bernick was not a diseased man; he was a victim of environment. The difference between "Pillars of Society" and "John Gabriel Borkman," is the difference between summer heat and autumn ripeness. Mr. Henry James speaks of Ibsen's "violent substance," of his characters that "have no tone but their moral tone." [1] If he is attracted toward Ibsen, it is a miracle which he cannot fathom:—"a miracle because [his power] is a result of so dry a view of life, so indifferent a vision of the comedy of things." Speaking of Ibsen's conquest of intensity, despite his meagreness of detail, or rather his "admirable economy," the same writer adds:

"There is no small talk, there is scarcely any manners. On the other hand, there is so little vulgarity that that of itself has almost the effect of a deeper, a more lonely provincialism. The background, at any rate, is the sunset over the ice."

In that last picture, Mr. James grips the whole

[1] See article on "Borkman," in *Harper's Weekly*, February 6, 1897.

tone of ' John Gabriel Borkman." It is preëminently a middle-aged story, where the value is centred on an old maid.

Ibsen's correspondence—at least that part of it which has been translated into English,—from the beginning of 1897 became sparse. On June 3d, he wrote to Bra[illegible]at revealed his state of mind. "In [illegible]," he said, "I am employing mys[illegible]something new of the nature of a dra[illegible]ve no distinct idea yet what it will be.'

The hand o[illegible]already hovering over Henrik Ibsen, a[illegible]on his part to clarify his vision so as to [illegible], points conclusively to the weakness of old age. It was the twilight of his life, and he would often turn to his family Bible—"for the sake of the language," he would say naïvely. On March 20, 1898, occurred the seventieth birthday of the poet; the world over, he found himself the object of interest. From England came Professor Gosse, with silver tokens to the Master Craftsman; the Storthing sent a deputation to his house; streams of officials and university men turned out to pay him homage; the Christiania theatres hailed him as their chief glory.

Not reckoning with his strength, Ibsen then went to Copenhagen to visit the King; both there and at Stockholm he was the centre of ovation after ovation. Once more in Christiania, his strength gave way, and the doors were closed to visitors; he was seized with a stroke, which, while it was not fatal, definitely undermined his constitution. He slowly recovered, sufficiently, in fact, to be seen once more by his

favourite window at Carl Johan's Gade. But the regularity of his work was broken. December, 1898, came around, and the reading public was surprised to learn that no new play by Henrik Ibsen would be published that year.

What might almost be called Ibsen's last triumph occurred on September 1, 1899; it has its humorous aspect as well as its deeply serious side. The National Norwegian Theatre was opened on that date, the King of Norway and Sweden officiating.

Outside of the massive building, bronze statues of Ibsen and Björnson were unveiled; it is whispered that, in the early grey of dawn, the two poets, each at his own time, slipped into the plaza to get a good, long, uninterrupted view of their metallic selves. But if bashfulness thus made them behave like children, there was no escaping the honours of the memorable evening. The King saluted these two beacons of Norwegian literary history—Ibsen and Björnson, seated in gilded chairs raised above the centre of the dress circle.

On September 2, 1899, the final Ibsen fête took place. A poem was read to him; he was cheered to the echo, and there followed a performance of "An Enemy of the People." Ibsen was overcome; people surged about him; a way had to be made down the aisle, on either side of which enthusiastic admirers stretched forth a hand to touch the Master. Is it not possible to reckon with the warm grip of life that took hold of his shrunken body? The world rose up in homage, yet the heart was past that kingdom which Ibsen had denied himself.

The greatest secrecy was observed about the writ-



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was vaguely speaking of something else to follow. The new drama had not been written with the usual ease; he had had to force himself in many places, against encroaching weakness; Death's hand was already upon him, and he knew it.

Despite such eminent opinion as one can find ranged on the side of a firm belief in the unabated strength and cogency of "When We Dead Awaken," it is impossible to overlook the wild wandering and disconnected imagery of the second and third acts. It is as though the whole phantasmagoria of Ibsen's life had filtered through his weakening brain, and he had caught fitful gleams of past glories. It is as though in Maia, of the earth earthy, and in Irene, the poet was balancing his old problem of "Emperor and Galilean," trying to see wherein he had missed life in an effort to fulfil his preordained mission.

In attempting this, Ibsen's two characters, Rubek, the sculptor, and Irene, the model,—whose soul has been sacrificed for art, even as Ella Rentheim's has been bartered for power,—are both endowed with the same qualities of mental weakness; to analyze their meaning consistently, one would have to prescribe physic for their constitutions. In a vague penumbra of existence, they meet, each having lost something

published in Copenhagen during 1901 and 1902. In 1902 appeared editions of his early plays "Kæmpehöjen" and "Olaf Liljekrans" (edited by Halvdan Koht); in the same year there was published a bibliographical edition of his works by Carl Nærup; and the "Correspondence," under the editorship of Koht and Julias Elias, was issued in 1904. The only German edition that I have consulted is "Henrik Ibsens Sämtliche Werke in deutscher Sprache," edited by George Brandes, Julius Elias, Paul Schlenther, in nine volumes.

people now; it was a cry forc
wilfully cold. After all, the be
as Mr. Percy Mackaye decla
"The test of love, and the best

We hear much concerning co
in "John Gabriel Borkman"
Dead Awaken." Maia does no
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And when it was all over, it
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the nakedness of Irene; all being
the heart of Rubek, even Mai
This is what it means to be a
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ever we come in contact with the

mostly fit subjects for an insane asylum; so distraught are they in their essential details that there is naught to reconcile them with reality. Through the mist we hear Ibsen reiterate his old proposition that life without love is death; through a picturesque and complicated maze of scenery, we put Rubek alongside of Brand in his upward climb—the one with an Ideal, the other with Irene; the one losing sight of the common humanity, the other hearing far off the joy of life in Maia's song.

Had Ibsen been at the height of his power, he would have known how to make poignant the savage conception of Ulfheim—for the brute element in life is as much a fact as any other element. Sense and spirit battle here for a basis of mutual recognition, but in the struggle, they blind Ibsen's view.

At times the characters in "When We Dead Awaken" utter some keen, poetic ideas; but temperamentally, in their escape of reality, they do not touch the realm of the supernatural, an element underlying "The Lady from the Sea" and "The Master Builder." We might point to many a John Gabriel Borkman, walking on Wall Street, as Dr. Slosson suggests,[1] and to many a Consul Bernick in New York homes, but only within the insane ward do we hope to discover an Irene, with Rubek in the ante-room.

However weak Ibsen grew, he nevertheless seems to have retained to the very end his enviable instinct for dialogue, nowhere better exemplified than in the first act of "When We Dead Awaken." Because of these

[1] See "Ibsen as an Interpreter of American Life." Edwin E. Slosson. *The Independent*, May 31, 1906, pp. 1253-1255.

true touches that flicker into flame, the obscurity of reason seems all the more obscure. As the critic said, "The man of science has discovered the soul [in this drama], and does not altogether know what to do with it." Perhaps in real life that is so; perhaps, when revelation rushes on us, it finds us helpless in our exercise of will; having fought with direct purpose for the vague, we know not what to do when the vague becomes evident.

Were we so inclined, we might enter the realm of spiritualism in our discussion of "When We Dead Awaken," but it would be carrying Ibsen much further than he ever went. Suppose a dead love has had an active influence upon Rubek, it does not make the embodiment, Irene, any the less insane. So suggestive is the title of Ibsen's play, that we might carry it to any length, without clearing the Ibsen secret, without reaching the Ibsen solution.

"When We Dead Awaken" is Ibsen's art tribute on the altar of love; upon its surface, he has sketched faint tracings from "Brand," from "Hedda Gabler," from "The Master Builder," from "John Gabriel Borkman." We hear the same chant that rose above the crashing avalanche beneath which Brand was buried.

When a man of Ibsen's age turns upon himself, and becomes satiric over the outcome of his life-work, it is as though he had laughed at his own funeral. Yet though he may thereby have shown that he doubted the efficacy of his mission, he was nevertheless affirming, with unshakable faith, the essential and fundamental elements in life. We might carry M. Rod's critique still further, and say that Ibsen here

for the first time writes a play which, wherever it is coherent, stands representative of an emotion.[1]

The sands in the hour glass were slowly coming to the end. Ibsen's pen was no longer to be active. Only now and then did a fitful spark take hold of him; he had almost done with the world, even though the world refused to be done with him. During the Boer War he was attacked on the ground that his sympathies were for the English; the Dutch papers took the matter up, and Cornelius Karel Elout even went so far as to write a book on the subject. To the latter Ibsen addressed a dignified reply (December 9, 1900) to an open letter which had appeared in *Politiken;* herein he persisted in his desire to remain a man of peace in politics, to be neutral in all questions of war. Historically, it is very evident that his sympathies rested with England.

A second apoplectic stroke seized Ibsen in 1902, and from this he never quite recovered; in fact, only in fitful moments was he himself, gaining sufficient strength to show his pleasure over Norway's freedom in 1905, and over the accession of King Håkon.

After this the darkness of night settled upon Henrik Ibsen; his mind gave way completely, and he became even as his own conception of Oswald in "Ghosts." When he talked, he murmured incoherently in a mixture of Norwegian and German. His acts were childish, as he walked around his room,

[1] Rod writes: "Par son dénouement, la dernière pièce d'Ibsen, qui est un suprême poème d'amour, tel que peut le concevoir un vieillard dont les yeux ont fouillé tous les secrets de la vie, va rejoindre le seul drame d'amour dont on puisse le rapprocher: celui *Tristan et Iseult* qu'emporte ensemble, pareillement, la même vague d'apaisement et d'oubli."

stopping now and then to gaze vacantly from his window. He would greet the untiring devotion of his wife with warm show of affection, and the appearance of his grandchildren, Tankred, Irene, and Eleonora, seemed to give him peculiar pleasure. Thus passed the time until May, 1906.

All this while the outside world was eager for any new bulletin; a big world-figure lay dying in Christiania. How many thought of the poor student who had first come to the Norwegian capital; of the poverty-stricken genius who, after a long period of penury, exiled himself for twenty-seven years, never once relinquishing his innate love for Norway, though the national characteristics taxed him sorely?

Ibsen, the Master, lay dying, and nations sent inquiries; a little man, scorned in his ideas, hated for his truth and his frank intention, had brought the world around to believe in his power. Slowly the days in May passed by until on the afternoon of the 23d—at 2:30, to be exact—Henrik Ibsen died at his home opposite the Royal Gardens. What did it matter if the King of Norway attended his funeral, which was made a public function; or whether King Edward VII sent his representative? There are two conflicting queries that rise up in one's mind over the pomp with which the exit of Henrik Ibsen was made. The world was paying tribute to the power of intellect; in general, very few had a right conception of the man. But only in the balance of the two will one be able to see Henrik Ibsen as he should be seen. The limitations, the depths of his work, will measure the limitations, the depths of his view. A knowledge of the man will temper his cold intensity of thought.

CHAPTER XXI

HENRIK IBSEN, THE MAN AND HIS PLAYS

HENRIK IBSEN was preëminently a man of his time; the current by which civilization advances, carried him faster than the rest of men. A poet who stands ten years ahead of his age is given the power to see twenty years beyond the ken of the average vision. To this gift of far sight, may be added the depth and concentration which stamped his genius. Ibsen is a remarkable figure in the nineteenth century, for he is one of the intellectual forces by which the nineteenth century will be recognised in the future. When the intensity of his application, however, has fallen into its proper proportion, the universality of his intention and scope will be found to lack a value of the first rank.

If a study of the man and his work has not impressed us with the positive weight of his mission, then we have not seen Henrik Ibsen at all; he is neither food for children, nor a palliative for weak souls; he demands a generous spirit, a mind ready for conviction, a sympathy based on understanding. What he is, he was forced to make the world acknowledge; imposing a hard, unadorned standard for his followers, he made the task of adherence still more difficult for himself. If, in the long battle, the Ibsen believers were wounded, they could be certain that he himself was being crucified.

The misunderstanding of Henrik Ibsen is largely due to one of two things: ignorance of his purpose, of his philosophy, and of the terms by which the principles of modern philosophy are characterized; or else an hysterical approach to his meaning

through hidden and unessential channels. His moral and his mental tones are popularly misconceived under the term pessimism, without proper emphasis being placed upon the active optimism toward which he was always working.

We have crystallized notions of Henrik Ibsen; to the popular mind he represents a shudder, even as to the popular eye he appears like the fretful porcupine. But time will add soft colour to the sombreness of his view, even as it will bring out a gentleness from beneath the "buttoned-up" severity of his manner.

As a man, Ibsen was thoroughly human; isolation gave him an aloofness of manner, and sensitiveness imposed upon him a crusty coating for protection. But he possessed a certain grace that comes with the realization of a God-imposed task. There is no doubt that he loved a fight, that his nature was warlike. He told Brandes, in 1871, that Bredahl, "the indignation pessimist," was one of his favourite poets, because, as he stood behind "the plough in a peasant's smock," he "had viewed mankind and the world with angry eyes."

Ibsen, the man, was of varied and contradictory temper. He was positive in his views, sometimes sweeping, as, for instance, when he told Peter Hansen (1888) that his Danish translation of "Faust" was the finest in existence. But he did not resent being criticised in his turn; "All this I have chosen to say to you quite frankly," he wrote to Hartvig Lassen (1877), ". . . I give you free permission to retaliate in kind."

Ibsen possessed a large amount of personal van-

ity; in his habits he was precise and formal; it is said that his house, furnished in ornamental fashion, was arranged in almost stiff regularity, while his study bore the same signs of order and concentration that his written manuscript possessed. He was particular about his titles, and his decorations,[1] and he showed a naïve enjoyment over his association with royalty that was not wholly compatible with his dignity.

Though in soul he was isolated, and though his life was largely based upon a consideration of things remembered—memory with him plays a vital part—Henrik Ibsen was not a recluse; he was a citizen of the world in body as well as in mind, loving to walk, finding delight in travel, noting the picturesque in environment; but subjecting everything to the consuming seriousness of his nature.

There is some truth in the picture of the pompous little figure, tramping up and down his room with hands behind his back, defying interruption, and resenting people who watched him with curious intent. Simple in his general bearing, one always pictures him as seated in what Mr. Gosse called "permanent silence," no details escaping his observation.

As a friend, Ibsen showed a tendency to confidence, but it was not an easy matter to be a friend in return; one had to remain content with spiritual communion, accepting the will for the deed. So real were people to him, even in their absence, that "anything more seemed superfluous," Ibsen once wrote after months of silence. But he never failed

[1] See Letter, Correspondence, 105.

to give expression of joy over the success of his friends: was staunch and true, bestowing recognition c erit to all who, like himself, were involved in the ir ectual advance of the age.

To h iographers Ibsen had the faculty of discussing nmself as though he were an outside person; he ga ies of estimate, as he would gauge . he critic; he was appreciative of d was eager to help them toward a ding of his work. In certain ways r etted, after all, that Hegel discour desire to prepare an autobiographical .

He had little the average critic, though he was always first to acknowledge his indebtedness to honest criticism; his ire knew no bounds when he felt that he was being taken to task simply because he was himself, and for no organic or fundamental reason. That is why he had the habit of hedging in what was most meaningful to him. But whenever he was attacked, he met the opposition with silent fortitude. "Be dignified," he once wrote to Brandes; "dignity is the only weapon against such assaults."

Although he reached his maturity at an early age, Ibsen was always approaching different angles of vision; he was always changing. The way in which that alteration occurred is seen in the gradual advance from his Norwegian to his Scandinavian point of view, and finally to his wider Teutonic racial sympathies.

Ibsen's self-appointed task demanded that he regard his friends as "expensive luxuries"; more-

over, in order to give freedom to his intellect, he sacrificed his family to the cause. Ibsen's barque being freighted with the conventional baggage of life, he threw overboard the accepted things of life as readily as a man-of-war clears her decks for action. Ibsen's exile is not unlike that of Dante's, though it was not tempered with the same humane refinement of feeling. Distance brought Ibsen the essence of Norway; he might despise the Norwegians in their weakness, but he loved his country. In 1870 he wrote: "One describes summer best on a winter day." That is the manner in which he respected distance.

If Ibsen possessed culture, it was marked with the quality of Puritanical severity and not of richness. His understanding was not based upon a wide acquaintance with books; he seemed to pride himself upon his persistent ignoring of authors. His likes and dislikes were strong, and in certain instances his lack of sympathy was surprising. In intellectual satisfaction he was nearer to his Bible than he was to Zola or Tolstoi or Mill; he knew but little of Shakespeare, and expressed no desire to know more, until the publication of Brandes' critique on the poet. He was endowed with the gift of being able to read only fragments of an author when he could *sense* his value. He once wrote to a Byron translator that, although he was only familiar with a few of Byron's poems, he had a feeling "that his works, translated into our language, would be of great assistance in freeing our æsthetics from many moral prejudices." He often threw his own judgment, not based on scholar

balance ı the opinions of experts, and his conclusions e never so far wrong in their values. The one eat thing that irritated Ibsen, was to have to ı ıbat any statement of his indebtedness to authors; he was only too eager to proclaim his ignorance of them, as, for example, Kierkegaard [Letter, 4([229], and Dumas [229].[1]

As a letter chibits a very narrow vein; the for as shown sufficiently wherein the va- igh Ibsen wrote with frankness, he c p himself completely, and he had an ı long arguments on paper. The "Cor e," as published for English readers, exhibits many gaps which the years may fill. In the midst of trivial details and an unnecessary amount of emphasis upon money matters, which might easily have been eliminated by the editors, we are able to gather the vital outlines for an excellent portrait.

Ibsen was not a brilliant letter writer, nor is there displayed any unusual amount of critical illumination. Though the style in which this collection (as translated by Mr. Laurvik and Miss Morison) is written, shows by its unevenness that the statements

[1] Regarding foreign influence on Ibsen, consult Jules Lemaître, "Contemporains," 6e series; Émile Faguet discusses the connection between George Sand and Ibsen, in *Journal de Débats*, January 11, March 15, 1897; Victor Basch on "Ibsen et George Sand," *Cosmopolis*, February, 1898; George Brandes on "Henrik Ibsen en France," *Cosmopolis*, January, 1897. As for Kierkegaard, in addition to what has already been said, consult Maurice Muret's "Un précurseur d'Ibsen, Sören Kierkegaard," *Revue de Paris*, July 1, 1901.

were not penned with a conscious thought of future publication, yet there is a *naïveté* about the book not wholly devoid of a peculiar charm; there is even a conciseness that marks most of his dramas. Mr. Howells calls them "crabbed, formal, painfully truthful" letters.

To a remarkable degree the knowledge of Henrik Ibsen rests upon translation; those who came to him under the guise of interpreters, were generally prompted by serious motives, and did their work conscientiously, sometimes even brilliantly. In this respect Mr. Archer's efforts are distinctive. Ibsen had definite notions regarding the responsibility attaching to the duties of a translator. He wrote to Gjertsen, in 1872: "It is not simply a question of rendering the meaning. . . ." Only once was he heard to express impatience over the multifarious versions of his plays. "Unfortunately," he exclaimed, "I have far too many German translators." He knew neither French nor English sufficiently well to speak; it was with difficulty that he could read in either tongue. He deplored this lack, especially as it came between him and his desire to go to London. In 1895 and 1896 friends were trying to persuade him to make a trip to England.

Ibsen's theatre is one of ideas; against the artificiality of Scribe, he places a naturalism which is peculiarly his own; he deals most intimately with human life, cleansing the commonplace of every unessential; his details are luminous. To this intensity of matter he brought a technique that was always interesting, and ever increasing in its dynamic simplicity.

In his artistic development, however, we must be careful never to dissociate the different stages. Although he advanced from the sentiment and romance of Oehlenschläger, Ibsen never freed himself from the romantic spirit; though he arrived at a period when he found it no longer necessary for him to resort to the subterfuges of the "well-made" play, he never forgot the theatricalism of Scribe, however much he might lay it aside.

Ibsen was instinctively the dramatist; he converted all things into terms of action; he read his newspaper with an eye on the stage; books appealed to him, especially if they contained the possibilities of a play. "Have you not noticed," he wrote to Lorentz Dietrichson, in 1879, "that you have in the division of your poem, entitled 'A Norwegian Sculptor,' the subject for a five-act popular play?" Again, to Jonas Lie, in 1900, he wrote: "Do you not think of dramatizing the story of Feste? . . . Just listen!" In both instances he sketched a scenario.

We have commented sufficiently on Ibsen's style to know its dominant characteristics; he was hardly ever light and airy; even in "Brand" and "Peer Gynt," the abandon of spirit was always tempered by restraint. When he gained his perfection of prose, instead of the deep purple patches of "Emperor and Galilean," we were given a monotone essence in diction used by no other playwright on the stage. And because of his severity in later treatment, Ibsen was deprived of the great element, variety. Professor Dowden supports this view when he writes: "The range of varying levels of dra-

matic dialogue in Shakespeare is incomparably wider than it is in Ibsen."

He saw things at their highest pitch; most dramatists begin with the first act, and, according to conventional laws, proceed to the fifth. Ibsen illustrates that one may begin with the fifth act and defy conventional laws. Prof. Brander Matthews calls "Ghosts" a play of culmination, a "fifth act" only.[1]

Ibsen is not strenuous, but tense; as a workman, every detail is centred on the consuming idea; he is not a cheap technician, although he does resort to the theatrical for effect. As an artist his style presupposes form. But his form is active, not contemplative; his characters never awe, they interest because of their nearness. Ibsen's psychology is nervous; it is prompted by the forces of the moment, it is acted upon by the forces of the past.

As a craftsman Ibsen was slow and painstaking; his outline, his second draft, his "fair copy" represented long periods of study, during which his characters meant everything to him; situation, in his theatre, is secondary. The outward scene in his dramas is compressed to its lowest terms. In the midst of his disgruntled estimate, Max Nordau none the less speaks the truth: "It is the return to the Aristotelian doctrine of the unities of time and space, with an orthodoxy compared with which the French classicists of the age of Louis XIV are heretics." It is because the content is so vital that the

[1] See "Ibsen, the Playwright," by Brander Matthews, *Bookman*, February, 1906, p. 568. Contained also in his "Inquiries and Opinions." The discussion considers the influence.

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heads: (1) those connected with religion; (2) those contrasting the past with the present; (3) those that treat of social classes and their life-struggle; (4) those that discuss the relation of the sexes. I cannot quite say, with Brandes, that Ibsen's tendency was to reduce his characters to ideas; but it is sometimes evident that, as a dramatist, he does commit some peculiar errors in logic for the sake of those ideas.

Ibsen's value as a modern writer lies in his insistence upon the application of the doctrine of evolution to matters of intellectual life. Because, in his plays, he puts himself ahead of his age, people instantly called him an anarchist, a socialist, an iconoclast of all that is established in society. But his "third empire" in no way presupposes license. Ibsen's aim in life is thoroughly ethical; according to his nature, however, he approaches the facts of life in his own way, concerning himself only with those facts that jeopardize life. Only after one has been taught to reject the lie is one able to accept the truth. He would rather struggle than be at peace. The whole of life for him centres in becoming, not in the attainment. Ibsen's pessimistic moments were mostly within himself, when, for example, he doubted —and here we note his egoism tempered by the streak of Puritanism in him—whether his "third empire" would ever materialize.[1]

Viewing life, therefore, from its stormy side, Ibsen's error was largely the product of his ignoring the other side. His aim was not to give one pleas-

[1] Compare Ibsen, Nietzsche, and Wagner in their relation to the "third empire."

ure; not to seek the best in life. His social criticism did not take the form of searching for reasons why particular conditions and relations exist, but of showing why particular conditions should not exist. If his "third kingdom" lacked a dominant principle, as Boyesen rightly avers, the lack was due to a want in Ibsen himself, of any systematized, thorough-grounded education. He is an untutored idealist and revolutionary, but his red flag does not sanction violence.

Ibsen's whole social attitude presupposes a free development of the individual; his idea of a new society makes it essential; every true relation which may exist between man and woman determines it. Because the individual is hemmed in, is developed unevenly, it is to be expected that the family is unstable, that love is hollow, that truth and light are obscured. Ibsen's idea of free marriage does not do away with whatever social convention the world accepts as a symbol of the marriage bond; he simply believes that there are those living in wedlock who have never been joined spiritually; that there are some marriages which are immoral, existing simply because the marriage bond holds them. The human conscience must be aroused. Whatever we may say concerning the elastic boundaries of Ibsen's freedom, we can never escape his firm belief in nobility of motive and purity of conscience. The individual shall not work against society, but by his own fulness and purity he shall cleanse society of its enormous ills.

Ibsen is constantly insisting that the duty of one's life is "to realize one's self"—in what manner he

does not quite make clear, for the free exercise of will in his dramas results in disaster, as a proof that one needs must make certain compromises with conditions. There are moments in a lifetime, however, when one can best benefit society by developing to the highest point that which Ibsen, in September, 1871, was seeking in Brandes—"a full-blooded egoism"—an individualism blind to anything outside of itself. "There is no way in which you can benefit society more than by coining the metal you have in yourself." He would thus found his society, not upon the unit of the State, but upon the unit of the Individual. If this is such a radical conception for the people, they will eventually become educated to the idea. Radical in thought, Ibsen was far from radical in action. "He has less courage than Nietzsche," writes Mr. Arthur Symons, "though no less logic, and is held back from a complete realization of his own doctrine because he has so much worldly wisdom, and is so anxious to make the best of all worlds."

If one will examine closely the characters in Ibsen's dramas, it will be discovered that, however extreme their views, they are always made to realize, through love, through grief, wherein their views have been too extreme. Having thrown all human consideration overboard in a frantic effort to maintain a supremacy of will, these individuals, dried up in their intensity, and lacking the yielding quality of unctiousness, have naught to fall back on, and therefore are willing to make any sacrifice in order to gain that which awaits them ahead.[1]

[1] Ossip-Lourié, in his "La Philosophie So

With this in mind, I think we may reconcile what most conservatives regard as Ibsen's incendiary remark that the State must be done away with, if the individual is to live. When the processes of evolution are focussed close together, and when the distinctive stages follow each other in rapid succession, as they do in drama, but as they do not in nature, the cataclysm is startling, even though it is not true. Ibsen's individualism did not presuppose defiance, but preparation. In this spirit one should read the discussions as to Church and State which colour the final pages of "Brand"; in this spirit we must take his declaration that "a State may be annihilated, but not a nation."

Living in a very prescribed society, Ibsen in his plays yet outlines a very noble conception of a new social organism, where the clergy, the press, the politician, the capitalist, the younger generation, and the family shall all be placed upon a different and a sounder basis. Ossip-Lourié summarizes what he considers to be the positive effect of Ibsen's social philosophy, under the following heads: (1) Individual and social regeneration is possible. Love is the primary basis of it; (2) Truth and Light; (3) Individual Effort—will, action, liberty, justice; (4) the Family and not the individual constitutes the unity of Society; (5) the Emancipation of Woman.

d'Ibsen," writes: "L'individu qui désire reconquérir la totalité de sa personnalité originale, doit se soustraire plus ou moins complètement à l'influence générale, s'isoler du groupe social, redevenir lui-même, abandonner toutes les conventions mensongères, rechercher la vérité et la lumière, reconquérir sa puissance, sa force individuelle, qu'il mettra plus tard au service de la société."

Ibsen lived to see many effects in Norway which transpired from his preachments.

Ibsen's plays and letters very clearly indicate his attitude toward party politics; we see the opposition elements in his conceptions of Stensgård and Stockmann; his political views were not theoretical, they were practical and mandatory.[1] He was thoroughly in accord with the modern social point of view; but his chief concern was for the raw material, as it were, out of which the future was to be constructed.

The elements of society, as they exist, were never pleasing to him; he could see in them only menace; they were always held under suspicion. Ibsen's highest point in social philosophy is to be found in "Rosmersholm"; the reason he despised the average man was because he did not think it possible to strike an average anything. The newspapers were bad because the professional reporter had supplanted the noted editorial writer; politics were bad because the politicians were small in aim and weak in will. In many ways, by the very aversion he showed to answer questions or to indicate means, Ibsen had the same aloofness from the crowd that Matthew Arnold had.

The hope of the younger generation rests upon the revitalizing of society, and the New Society, as seen by Ibsen, involves the establishing of the Family on a firmer and truer basis; there must be no corruption, and no deception; in all relations there must be perfect understanding. Sentiment must not blind one, which does not mean that sentiment should not exist. Marriage to-day is largely based on ig-

[1] See Correspondence, 178—To Björnson, Rom

norance, prompted by no deeper motive than a certain pleasure, a certain external gratification. In Ibsen's plays marriage is usually a one-sided affair. And so, his conception of the Family, bearing in mind the outcome of his many family tragedies, is, after all, a very noble one, although he proceeds to show this by painting the blackest condition. The salvation of the Family, and hence the salvation of Society, will depend upon whether or not the Individual is to be allowed to develop in a healthy manner, ethically, morally, spiritually, and physically.

We have shown how, in "Love's Comedy," Ibsen came very near creating a noble concept of love; but, despite this fact, people have so far misunderstood his motives as to accuse him of believing in no love at all. Similarly Ibsen is to-day popularly regarded as an advocate of the separation of the sexes; this is far from his view; on the contrary, he never protests against the family; his indignation is completely concerned with the conditions on which the family is founded. Ossipe-Lourié[1] states the case plainly when he says that Ibsen "wishes a free man and a free woman, and in order to have a free man, the woman *must* be free." In this way only does he hope to have a perfect union of sexes.

I have emphasized elsewhere that Ibsen only regarded the woman's cause as one side of the social problem;[2] he did not consider it, *per se*, the only

[1] The same author says: "L'individu, c'est le genue fécond, le rayon vivifiant, le régénérateur qui amènera la purification de la vie sociale, la vraie liberté, la vraie justice, la vraie solidarité humaine."

[2] Consult the Norwegian law of June 29, 1888, in its bearing on women.

vital problem. But in Ibsen's accentuation of certain phases, is it not partly true, as Nordau pointed out, that his women appear to have no duties, but all rights? It is a question at times, despite the high moral and philosophical intention which is the motive power, whether or not the consequent actions are tinged by a lower order of feminine instinct. However, it is false to conceive of Ibsen's sanctioning a love or relation purely sensual in its positive worth.

All of Ibsen's women are related, cut from the same cloth; they all have capacities which have been perverted by some social condition. In Ibsen's world the man and woman must be complements, one to the other. It will take some time for this equality to adjust itself, but when it does take effect, there will be no element of jealousy left in the compact, there will be no tone of condescension, there will be no necessity for suppression of individual tastes. The union of sexes is something above law, even though by law it is solemnized. But, since humanity is not a constant factor, we might well question whether this requisite of free marriage anywhere assures the stability or permanence of the choice? Ibsen, no doubt, meant the unswerving perpetuation of the union, but he reckoned on the Superman's strength, not on the average variability.

Yet the remarkable thing about Ibsen's women is that, however similar they may be in outline, they represent very diverse phases of intellectual, social, and spiritual development. This makes us ponder the subtle distinction in the critic's remark that, had Nora been Rebecca West, she never would have married Helmar. Another phase of the Ibsen

marriage is detected in the relations between the man and woman in his social dramas; the former, by the union, is in no way hampered, while upon the latter is thrust the necessity of sacrificing, of subordinating some of her individuality in the assumption of the duties of motherhood. As an individualist, Ibsen would like to see such a mutual trust, and such a mutual realization of reciprocal duties, as will lead to full development of rights on all sides. So perfectly balanced in his own mind was this idea of equality, that it is small wonder Ibsen sometimes despaired when he tried to adjust theory to practice.

Because of his acute vision, Ibsen's impressionistic dealing with scientific facts, while illogical and often falsely correlated, none the less reached the desired effect. Even though they may not have faithfully detailed the scientific processes, they drew attention to the importance of larger scientific law or principle, and pointed out the fatal consequences of ignoring action and reaction. From this standpoint Ibsen's characters, and most generally his women, are interesting pathological studies; they carry symptoms which are to be found in the medical books, and which, though they may not act wholly in the way science has proved them to act, at least are indicative of neurasthenia in its varying degrees. Ibsen blotted out for his purposes any conception of the heredity of nobility; his irritation would not allow him to conceive of such. But in his earlier years he had had just a sufficient amount of medical training to give him confidence in his ignoring of special diagnosis; he relied here on his observation.

In his pessimism Ibsen is saved by his healthy

indignation; in his seeming lack of restraint in his ideas, he is saved by the theological crease in his nature. He might be accounted didactic, were it not that he conceived his idea in terms of action. He was an unsystematic thinker, but, as Mr. Archer says, "his originality lies in giving intense dramatic life to modern ideas." His theology finds expression in "Emperor and Galilean"; his ethics and morals lie hidden in all of his plays.[1]

There is no gainsaying the value of Ibsen to his age; we may not always take life so seriously, but this in no way makes actual living less serious. We may be given to cling to the sunnier side of doubt, but the fact remains that truth will be hidden until the doubt is cleared away. We will never be able to systematize the Ibsen idea, although we may be able later to measure definitely the Ibsen technique. But in his moral and ethical value, he will in years to come bear that relation to his period which Rousseau and Voltaire bore to theirs. His portraits have not the large humanity which will allow them to be separated from their age. That is why "The Pretenders," "Brand," and "Peer Gynt" have more claim upon the future than "A Doll's House."

[1] Théodore Lasius, in his "Prémisses Psychologiques et Religieuses de son Œuvre," insists on Ibsen's profundity of moral life. He writes: "Henrik Ibsen a été le premier homme qui nous ait fait comprendre l'inviolabilité de la loi intérieure. C'est lui qui nous a ouvert le ciel de l'Évangile et nous a initié aux mystères de toute vie religieuse, en nous faisant comprendre toute l'incomparable grandeur et la beauté sublime de l'œuvre du Christ."

THE END

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